CHAPTER III

POST ZIA-PAKISTAN DRIFT INTO EXTREMISM
As discussed in the chapter I, the military establishment after Zia's death continued to maintain a powerful grip over Pakistani politics. More importantly, the unholy alliance between the army and the clergy cemented under Zia's authoritarian rule was not disturbed despite the restoration of democracy. In fact, the alliance continued to grow in strength partly because of the Islamic basis of the state institutions and in greater part, the absence of any dramatic development in the external environment. While Jihad in Afghanistan had qualitatively transformed an essentially local conflict into global concern, domestically the legitimation function of the Islamist groups was bolstered by both weak institutions and the lack of broad consensus among the mainstream political parties as regards the rules of the game. As they made the political system increasingly dependent on networks of patronage and personal loyalty, the "over-developed state" failed miserably to implement legislations thereby rendering it vulnerable to interference of the military, which remained as before the paramount force and ultimate arbitrator in Pakistan.¹

In brief, the two main factors which would account for the failure of the Pakistani democratic experiment after Zia include firstly, the primacy of the military in politics as well as policy-making process, and secondly, the mutual interdependence of the clergy and the military elite for the protection and preservation of their entrenched interests. This chapter discusses the developments from the restoration of democracy in 1988 until the rise of General Musharraf to power. Broadly, it is argued that the short-lived democratic experiment and its final eclipse in the aftermath of the Kargil crisis reveal the fragility of the both democratic institutions as well as the civil society, along with it, the receding confidence of people on the ability of the civilian political actors to deliver. In fact, it was their failure to evolve a set of norms and means to resolve political differences made them susceptible to the manipulation by both the influential religious bodies and the institutionally powerful military.

The 1988 Election and Its Aftermath

The 1988 elections provided a relatively smooth transfer of power into civilian hands, but viewed from another perspective the election can be viewed as the "reassertion of arbitrary executive power by President Gulam Ishaq Khan and an undermining of the democratic course of Pakistan's politics". The Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) emerged as the single largest party and assumed power at the centre. The party performed exceedingly well in Sindh and Benazir became the first Muslim woman to occupy the post of Prime Minister on December 2, 1988. There was hope and optimism in the region and beyond owing to her image as a progressive and modern leader. The problems before her however were complex owing to lack of democratic traditions and continued interference from the President who enjoyed great power under the amended constitution and lack of co-operation from the army.

First, Benazir Bhutto was perceived as being anti-state and anti-army had conspired against the military from exile and abroad. Second, acceptance from the military was not forthcoming owing to long years of military supremacy in Pakistan. The army wanted an assurance from her that she should keep off from the Afghan policy and the most important of all, Pakistan's nuclear programme and in addition, from promotions, transfers and financial allocations to the armed forces. But Benazir asserted her constitutional powers in appointing the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee (JSC) and antagonised both the President and the army. The President proclaimed the powers to appoint the JSC under Article 243 (c) of the amended constitution under Zia ul Haq. Benazir's Bhutto's government realised the need to do


3 In the 1988 election the PPP got 93 seats the IJI got 54, JUI (F) 7 and the rest was sparcely distributed among Independents and smaller parties. See Saeed Shafqat, "Transition to Democracy" in R. Bakhsh Rais, (ed.), State, Society and Democratic Change in Pakistan (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1997), p.241.


5 See Hassan Abbas, Pakistan's Drift into Extremism: Allah, the Army, and America's War on Terror (Armonk, New York: M. E. Sharpe, 2005), p. 136. Abbas has argued that Benazir did make efforts to build trust with the army as evident in her willingness to retain Shahibzada Yakub Khan, a favourite of the both the army as well as its patron, the U. S.
away with the 8th Amendment to the Constitution but faced formidable constraints in the form of opposition from fellow colleagues. The old partners of the PPP did not press for the repeal of the amendment which they believed would help PPP politically and the IJI struck to its old position that the eight amendments “aimed at creating a balance between the two offices of the president and Prime Minister.”

The role of the ISI was no less important in widening the gulf between the Prime Minister, President and other centers of power. The Inter Service Intelligence (ISI) had a dubious role in effecting an alliance of right wing parties headed by Nawaz Sharif to counter Benazir Bhutto, and make things difficult for her by IJI opposition. First the opponents of Benazir were allowed to form government in Punjab and then they encouraged the Nawaz Sharif and his coalition to directly challenge the central government. The spirit manifested in the rivalry proved damaging to the growth of democracy in Pakistan and weakened her position. The charges against Benazir by her adversaries were that she was seeking to topple the Nawaz Sharif government by unconstitutional means. Her political rival on the other hand campaigned for provincial autonomy which led to the creation of provincial banks and strengthened his position in Punjab politics.

Needless to mention, Sharif had developed contacts with the Military elite and had a relatively wider acceptability among them. Instead of working against the common enemy both the parties created conditions for the latter to intervene in national politics in blatant violation of democratic norms. When they tried to remove Nawaz Sharif in Punjab the country witnessed the worst kind of horse trading and political vulnerability among political parties. The IJI also indulged in intrigues to dislodge the federal government of Bhutto. Adding to Benazir’s woes was the breakdown of political coalition between PPP and Mohajir Quami Mahaz (MQM) and the rise of ethnic and

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7 Hamid Gul the Chief of the ISI often described Nawaz Sharif to be the product of their agency. He was quoted as saying, “although we could not take Jalalabad, we managed to save Punjab”. See Abbas, *Pakistan’s Drift*, n. 5, p. 137.

political strife in Sindh.\footnote{See Adeel Khan, *Politics of Identity Ethnic Nationalism and the State in Pakistan* (New Delhi: Sage publications 2005) pp. 152-155 and 174 to 179. The Sindhi-Mohajir alliance was not a natural alliance since the Mohajirs undermined the separate ethnic and regional identity the Sindhis were fighting for. Sindh was in turmoil owing to the severe animosity between the two above ethnic groups and apart from that rural Sindh was unmanageable due to the dacoit menace. The army operation in Sindh led to accusations of excesses and the ISI role in stoking the fire of hatred led to anti PPP feelings. Urban terrorism and illegal arms menace led to total collapse of government machinery in Sindh and gave rise to a parallel government run by MQM mainly in cities like Hyderabad and Karachi.} Not to mention the charges of corruption against her husband Asif Ali Zardari and her close associates. The media trial of Mr. Zardari before the actual trial earned him the reputation of a master depleter of state treasury and the famous title of “Mr. Ten Percent”.\footnote{Arif Nizani, “A Balance Sheet in the Deficit”; *The Nation*, December 2, 1989 in Safqat, *Civil Military Relations in Pakistan*, n. 4, p. 233.} This humiliated and tarnished Benazir Bhutto’s image before her people. The relentless drive against Benazir from all quarters gave Ghulam Ishaq Khan the opportunity to evoke his redefined powers under the eighth amendment of the constitution.\footnote{The 8\textsuperscript{th} amendment of the constitution was like the Damocles sword over elected civilian governments. The amendment apart from giving legal protection to all martial law regulations provided immunity to all the actions of military since the coup. It empowered the president to appoint the Chief Justice, the Chief of the army and Supervise the functioning of the Executive and Legislature. He can question the Prime Minister on various issues of governance and dismiss the Prime-Minister and dissolve the Parliament if in his view the constitution is not followed. For an overview see Hamid Khan, *8\textsuperscript{th} Amendment Constitutional and Political crisis in Pakistan*, (Lahore: Wajidalis, 1994).} He dissolved the National Assembly and dismissed Benazir Bhutto’s government on charges of corruption and undemocratic practices on August 6, 1990.\footnote{Major charges against Benazir were horse trading confrontation with Provinces, civil disturbances in Sindh, use of derogatory statements against senate and failure to convene meetings of National Finance Commission and Council of Common Interests.}

The premature collapse of the PPP’s government was a pointer to the inherent institutional weakness of Pakistan’s polity, and the privileged position of the military. Thus despite the restoration of civilian rule Pakistan failed to rid itself of the military control and influences. Consequently Benazir as PM was unable to bring about significant changes both in the body politic as well as in the socio-economic sphere undercutting the pernicious effects of Zia’s Islamisation programme. It was high nigh impossible to act against the entrenched interest or for that matter defy the institutional primacy of the military which ironically had already defined the political parameters for the civilian actors.
The 1990 Elections and Reign of Nawaz Sharif

The dismissal of Benazir Bhutto in 1990 was followed by worst style of political intrigue. Accountability proceedings were brought against Benazir amidst apprehensions of the whole process being unfair and partial. Though she retained her political right to lead her party to polls she was made to appear before tribunals in Lahore and Karachi during the period of elections. Her husband, Asif Ali Zardari, was arrested on criminal charges and his father, Hakim Zardari, too was charged. President Ishaq Khan far from being neutral patronised the Islamic Jamhoori Ittehad of Nawaz Sharif as an alternative to PPP. The Inter Services Intelligence Directorate is believed to have carried out an elaborate survey to locate the political standing of various parties before the 1990 elections. What was perceived was that the entire government machinery was geared to find a suitable and docile Prime Minister who could easily be manipulated.

The caretaker government organised elections within three months and the main contest was between PPP and a broad alliance led by IJI’s Nawaz Sharif. “With remarkable deftness, it managed an overwhelming victory for the IJI coalition in the national and provincial assemblies, including the usual PPP stronghold Sind.” The role of the caretaker government and ISI came under attack not only from People’s Party who alleged vote rigging and election fraud even international observers from US and France were critical of the entire election process, and certain practices.

The 1990 elections elevated Nawaz Sharif from the position of Chief Minister to the Prime Minister of Pakistan, but there were no changes in the basic framework of the Constitution. The checks on elected representatives of the people still remained. The seemingly peaceful relationship belied the deep undercurrents of insecurity and suspicion

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16 The various observer teams in the 1990 elections included the 16 member team from SAARC the four member team International Federation for Human Rights (IFHR) and 40 member team sponsored by National Democratic Institute for International Affairs.
between Sharif and his benefactor Ishaq Khan. Within a year of his stay in office strains were seen in the relationship. The reason for the strain was Sharif’s efforts to assert his position as an elected representative of the people and Gulam Ishaq Khan’s intolerance to proactive democratic leaders. Transition to democracy in Pakistan however did precious little to resolve old political issues. Although originally raised under previous civilian governments, such issues as ethnic unrest, unequal distribution of scarce resources, lack of a single binding political and economic ideology, the unstable nature of regional and global politics, the overbearing nature of military in a civilian setup and the constitutional impediments for a smooth functioning of a democratic state continued to haunt Nawaz Sharif.17

Both the Pakistani army and the ISI followed their respective agendas and no civilian government had the temerity to dilute or question them. The Pakistan army stuck to no roll-back of its nuclear policy, even in the face of severe American sanctions and the ISI pursued its programme of installing an Islamic government in Afghanistan and infiltrating trained armed guerillas into Kashmir. Nawaz Sharif behaved like a faithful disciple of the President and the army, initially to find a toe-hold in national politics, his aggressive campaign against PPP in collusion with the army can be explained as political opportunism. Benazir Bhutto was their target since she happened to be the common enemy of both IJI and the army.

After the initial bonhomie, Nawaz Sharif differed from his patrons not only on strategies and devices, but also on issues pertaining to external policy of the country. He had differences of opinion with the army general on the issue of supporting Iraq during the 1991 Gulf War.18 In addition, he entered into a conflict with the President over the question of appointment of a new Chief of Army staff. Above and all, Nawaz Sharif was increasingly uncomfortable with the ISI activities beyond the boundaries of the state. Despite UN sanctions, the ISI was believed to have airlifted sophisticated military hardware and missiles to Bosnian Muslims, and encouraged rebel Muslim separatism

17 Newberg, Judging the State, n. 15, p. 218.
18 Hussain Haqqani, Pakistan Between Mosque and Military (Lahore: Vanguard Books, 2005) p. 222. Mr. Haqqani writes that while general Beg talked of “strategic defiance” against the American hegemony Nawaz Sharif suspected the chief of planning a coup against his government.
among Chinese Muslims in Xinjiang province. The ISI activities included spreading the Islamist menace even to far off Philippines and Muslim rebel groups in Central Asian states.\(^19\) Nawaz Sharif’s proclamation that he vetoed the army’s and ISI plans to raise funds for such activities through clandestine drug trade revealed lack of trust and coordination between military and civilian authorities.\(^20\)

At the home front, Sharif followed a ruthless policy of suppressing his political adversaries, mainly the PPP so as to perpetuate him in power. Court cases were pursued against Benazir and other PPP leaders, and alliances were forged with MQM and National Awami Party of NWFP to foil Benazir’s political moves. His policy of confrontation with the PPP weakened the political system and nascent democratic traditions of Pakistan. The biggest beneficiaries of this intrigues was the military, which justified its intervention in the political process time and again. The Jamaat-i-Islami (JI) which was initially a part of political alliance with IJI developed a number of grievances against Nawaz Sharif. Foremost among them was Sharif’s pro-American position during the Gulf crisis for which his government was accused of being infested by the American virus.\(^21\) Other issues included his political alliance with the Mohajir Qaumi Movement (MQM) and his failure to enforce strict Islamic measures. Nawaz Sharif fell out with the establishment when he made efforts to be a real Chief Executive rather than a rubber stamp executive. In other words he tried to challenge the military from their comfort zones which led to a kind of power play between the Prime Minister and the army.\(^22\)

Nawaz Sharif was dismissed by Ishaq Khan whom he accused of conspiring against the federation.\(^23\) The dismissal of yet another directly elected government on April 18, 1993 before its term in office was a repetition of history. Apart from pointing towards military hegemony it revealed weakness of parliamentary democracy. Nawaz

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20 Ibid., p. 148.


Sharif asserted himself as a liberal autocrat at the cost of democratic practices. Even though Sharif became popular in certain section of society his political activities rendered the Institutions rather fragile. At the same time his independent attitude stirred fear in the President and the army about his political ambitions and the chances of the upstaging the military bosses.

Nawaz Sharif who went to court challenging his dismissal got a historic verdict in his favour. Sharif rejoined office after the court's decision but the domestic political scene was far from normal. The provincial assemblies were dissolved and the main opposition party of the country led the agitation for fresh elections. In the chaotic state of affairs the army stepped in to be the lead actor.

Benazir's second term in 1993

Pakistan went to polls under the supervision of Moeen Qureshi and Benazir Bhutto's PPP emerged as the single largest party in the national Assembly. Her second stint as Prime Minister began with a cautious note. Farooq Leghari a trusted friend of Benazir and PPP member since 1970's was elected to the post of President. She was eager to form new political coalitions and not disturb the Military-civil relationship. Benazir looked to be in control being relatively relaxed from the structural constraints of Zia's system but she still had many hurdles originating from weak political institutions and absence of democratic culture in Pakistan due to many years of military dominance. Her regime was not different from Nawaz Sharif's in terms of pursuing corruption and cases of misconduct against opposition leaders.

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24 N. Sharif worked to restore the confidence of the business community. He liberalized the investment procedures and took steps to denationalize loss making inefficient public sector industries and encouraged private banks. He was eager to bring an end to sanctions so that aid and development can resume. Sharif commanded considerable influence among the business and educated middle class.


On the domestic front, her term witnessed massive violence in Karachi internal bickerings in her party and charges of corruption particularly against her husband Asif Zardari. Karachi became Benazir’s sorrow. The city which was popular as the financial centre of Pakistan was home to majority of refugees from India who settled there after partition. The remainders were the Punjabis, Pathans Sindhis Baluchis etc. The Urdu speaking migrants from India called the Mohajirs had always asserted themselves for being the pillars of strength of the Pakistan Movement, and to protect their shrinking share in politics and economy they mobilized themselves under the banner of Mohajir Qaumi Movement headed by MQM supreme Altaf Hussain. The support base of the MQM though limited to urban centres, it was able to alternate its political alignment with both Benazir and Nawaz Sharif’s party at the behest of the ISI, and thus was able to share power with the federal government. Apart from fighting for their lost status, they aimed towards the creation of a fifth Pakistani province in Sindh, to be controlled exclusively by the Mohajirs. Critics however suspect them to be harbouring separatist dreams for Karachi.

Organisationally the MQM was not a coherent body. The army engineered many splits inside the party and promoted various factions within it. Over a period of time the MQM gained notoriety for resorting to extortions and intimidation for raising funds and silencing dissidents. With its resources and militia led network it ran a parallel government in Karachi and Hyderabad. The brutality of the MQM was highlighted when the Pakistan army chanced upon torture cells run by them. It two factions, MQM Altaf and MQM Haqiqi who indulged in factional killings and sectarian violence in Karachi threatened the stability of Benazir’s government. Adding to the problem was the

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28 Mohajirs in Pakistan enjoyed proximity to official positions owing to their proactive role during the Pakistan movement, and secondly due to high educational standards. Their prominence eroded due to shifting of the National capital from Karachi to Islamabad. The introduction of the employment Quotas in government jobs for Sindhis and other ethnic peoples affected them too.


31 Ibid., p. 328. The Pakistan Army launched a massive security crackdown in Sindh and was successful in arresting hundreds of MQM activists but it could not quieten the movement. The exiled MQM leader Altaf Hussein continued to direct the strife in Karachi through its organized cells.
resentment and hostility of the Sindhis to their loss of control of Karachi. The volatile ethnic population and their pent up discontent resulted in a severe civil war which lasted for more than a decade.

The over-stay of the Afghan refugees in Karachi and other cities of Pakistan not only altered the demographic profile of the city but also added to the economic and civil chaos. The war in Afghanistan gave a boost to the underground economy run by mafias who smuggled arms and drugs from the strife torn region into Pakistan. The Bhutto government had a different take on the MQM issue. Benazir was reluctant to enter into any kind of settlement with them calling them terrorists. She held the view that the organisation which was charged with criminal acts should eschew violence and honour judicial proceedings before the initiation of any political dialogue. If the PPP was successful in highlighting the terrorist nature of MQM the latter highlighted the atrocities committed by the government on Mohajirs and drew international attention towards violation of their human rights. “Clearly, the human and economic cost of PPP-MQM conflict in Karachi has been phenomenal and deepened the crisis of legitimacy of Bhutto’s government”. Despite a large presence of the army in 1995 nearly 2,095 people got killed and the city earned the reputation as the ‘city of death’. Continued violence, deaths in custody and extra-judicial executions raised serious doubts of re-establishing the harmonious relations between various ethnic groups.

Needless to mention, the rise of MQM in the urban centres of Sindh owes largely to the encouragement and official patronage to the organization by the military regime of Zia. The reason was to undermine the political base of Pakistan Peoples Party in Sindh. The PPP fell into the trap of nurturing unwarranted hostility towards MQM to preserve its

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32 Ikramul Haq, “Pak-Afghan Drug Trade in Historical Perspective”, Asian Survey, vol. 36, no. 10 (October 1996), pp. 944-45. The writer highlighted the commercial cultivation of opinion in Afghanistan which later found its way into Pakistani cities. The narcotic trade benefited the underground groups in Afghanistan and Pakistan and the money was used to fund insurgent warfare.

33 Shafqat, Civil-Military Relations in Pakistan, p. 244.

34 Ibid., p. 244.


37 Shafaqat, Civil-Military Relations in Pakistan, n. 4, p. 243.

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own constituencies and thus Karachi unrest became one of the main reasons for her dismissal from power in 1996.

Dominance of the Military

The relationship between civil-military bureaucracy and the political leadership in Pakistan was never an easy one and during Benazir's second tenure in office it was no different. The forced friendship showed signs of tension when ISI under Hamid Gul indulged in covert anti-government activities to defame her. There was no love lost between Benazir and the ISI even during her first tenure in office. It was believed that phone calls were being monitored and tapped, files were manipulated and her co-workers were threatened by the ISI. Benazir Bhutto challenged the hostile ISI by replacing Hamid Gul and placed Lieutenant General Javed Ashraf Qazi to help her reign the Islamists. The ISI was instructed to keep away from guerilla insurgency in the Indian part of Jammu and Kashmir. Pakistani army officers who were involved in the war in Afghanistan were asked to join the old units and many were retired. Majority of the ISI officials who were cold-shouldered by the government extended their help to various jehadi groups as consultants, and thus neutralised the government’s plan to silence them.

The change of political guard however, did not alter military’s grip over politics. The games were played but with a great deal of subtlety. It is well known that no civilian leader could dilute Pakistani involvement in Kashmir. “The insurgency in Kashmir was rooted in the ideology of Pakistani Islamists, carefully nurtured for decades by the Pakistani military” and “the level of military support for elected civilian leaders depended on their willingness to support the jihad in Kashmir”. Consequently, leaders of both the mainstream parties were forced to compete with the Islamists in their show of affection to the Kashmiri cause. Though the public postures of the government was extremely cautious which maintained that it offers only moral support to the groups fighting in

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38 See Haqqani, Pakistan Between Mosque and Military, n. 18, p. 204. The author mentions as incident how even the civil-servants ignored the presence of the civilian head of state and took national security decisions like allowing a high jacked Soviet plane to land in Pakistan.


40 Haqqani, Between Mosque and Military, n. 18, p. 235.
Kashmir, the truth was that material as well as logistical support was given in a massive scale through various lines of transnational support across the border.\textsuperscript{41} Both the military and religious groups inside Pakistan share great interests on Kashmir. They invested both resources and energy in recruitment, indoctrination and training of radical groups to pursue its strategic agenda in Kashmir and Afghanistan. Extremists groups thrived due to steady help from the ISI, Pakistan army and its Military Intelligence Services.\textsuperscript{42}

Over a period of time the Pakistani army was highly successful in projecting its image as a force capable of wresting Kashmir from Indian domination. In pursuit of the emotive dreams of thousand of Pakistanis, it justifies its hegemonic position inside the state. The propagation of Kashmir issue reinforces its legitimacy and demonstrates its primacy in the eyes of its people. The absence of strong party system, political structures and effective institutions makes them final arbiters in politics.\textsuperscript{43}

Thus, the hegemony of the military and the bureaucracy became primarily responsible for ensuring what Huntington calls “political order” and “political stability’. This, however, led to further fragmentation of political parties and weakening of interest groups. In other words it is the weakness and ineffectiveness of the political structures like weak parties, Election Commission, unstable Parliament and other democratic institutions which enabled the military to play a domineering role. Therefore, if the military and the bureaucracy remain dominant it is as much due to ineffective political structure as the relative autonomy and skillful organizational superiority of the army. This process which allows little space for articulation and aggregation of interest gave rise to forces hostile to the political system.\textsuperscript{44}

\textsuperscript{41} Hasan Askari Rizvi, “Pakistan and the Post-Cold War environment” in Baxter and Kennedy (eds.), \textit{Pakistan: 1997} (Delhi: Harper Collins, 1998), p. 42. Apart from official support various Islamic groups, extended material support to various Kashmiri groups and many also sent Jihadis/volunteers to participate in the war against Indian government.


\textsuperscript{44} This explanation is largely drawn from Huntington’s, \textit{Political Order in Changing Societies} (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1968), pp. 250-255.
Benazir Bhutto performed under such state of affairs. Her government though democratically elected was constantly under the surveillance of the president and military. It is said, “the Bhutto government operated against the backdrop of a hostile military establishment that was prepared to use any opportunity to remove her from power”. The entire sequence of military-bureaucratic domination in the context of Pakistan was explained to highlight the fragility of democratic institutions and difficulties of the civilian leaders to push their agenda of reforms and modernization. Consequently, governance under civilian leaders often resulted in military blacklash. Benazir Bhutto performed under the watchful eyes of military leaders who were highly contemptuous of politicians and their intentions. Even when Benazir projected a modern image of Pakistan and spoke of encouraging democratic trends, the army perceived a threat to their control over the country. Her call for direct foreign investment along with aid from USA was well received in the US and implied her wider acceptance among western circles. But in the domestic arena it led to the negation of the military’s model of seeking aid. She departed from tradition by emphasising not on Islam as the only source of national unity but on democracy – a bitter pill to swallow for the military.

**Benazir’s Dilemma**

Benazir’s tenure was also marked by personalisation of offices and various institutions. This included numerous appointments not on the basis of merit but on patronage and loyalty. Her lack of democratic approach while dealing with the judiciary led to a political crisis. The Jamaat-i-Islam spearheaded a campaign to remove her from office when she appointed twenty four new judges with a doubtful professional

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45 Samina Yasmeen, “Democracy in Pakistan: The Third Dismissal”, *Asian Survey*, Vol. 34, No. 6 (June, 1994), p. 573. The author gives a list of Benazir’s mistakes and to top it all her challenge to the army sealed her fate.


47 Husain Haqqani, *Pakistan Between Mosque*, n. 18, pp. 210-11. Haqqani states that Benazir’s moves at normalising ties with India also signaled the army’s loss of control. He opines that Benazir disturbed the age old formula of the army of keeping the nation’s attention focused on an external enemy.
reputation. The main charge against her was that she manipulated the high office of the judiciary with her sympathizers and supporters.\textsuperscript{48}

Benazir’s judicial crisis may have been due to her insecurities regarding the longevity of her government but she definitely had the opportunity to redefine and redirect pillars of democracy under the most trying circumstances. The Supreme Court ruling on March 20, 1996 negating her appointments strengthened the President’s hands.\textsuperscript{49} A chain of tragic events like assassination of Benazir Bhutto’s estranged brother allegedly at the hands of security forces on September 20, 1996 and anti-Shia violence in Multan threatening to spread to other cities and the Karachi crisis were episodes, which convinced the then President, a former PPP stalwart, to dismiss Benazir’s government before the expiry of its term on November 5, 1996.\textsuperscript{50} “The main reason was the “shoot to kill policy adopted by the police against members of the MQM in Karachi, which was a violation of our Islamic faith and all canons of civilized Government.”\textsuperscript{51} The Supreme Court of Pakistan upheld the other causes like corruption nepotism, complete breakdown of law and order interference in judicial matters and illegal phone-tapping as grounds sufficient to justify Benazir’s dismissal. “Islam did play an important part in the case: The President had mentioned in several places of his order dismissing Bhutto’s government that her actions had been in violation of Islam. This was confirmed by the Supreme Court.”\textsuperscript{52}

\textbf{Rise of Taliban and other Fundamentalist Groups during Benazir’s Second Term}

Benazir’s second term in office was a story of struggle towards the path of constitutional democracy. The parameters of Pakistani politics, however, left little space to challenge directly the destructive legacies of Zia ul Haq. While civilian leaders were


\textsuperscript{49} The Supreme Court while not allowing Benazir Bhutto to dictate the judiciary laid down conditions for their promotions and appointments. But Benazir failed to honour the court’s order in the Al-Jehad Trust Case.

\textsuperscript{50} Murtaza Bhutto had differences of opinion on various political matters and had set up his own faction of PPP. The theory given by the government that police fired in self defence which killed him had no takers. The interim government named Asif Zardari Benazir’s husband as the prime suspect.

\textsuperscript{51} Martin Lau, \textit{Role of Islam}, n. 25, p. 85.

\textsuperscript{52} Ibid., p. 85.
preoccupied with the anxiety of 8th Amendment to the Constitution, riding the state of religious bigotry looked a distant dream. Perennial Bonapartism and its nexus with the Islamists forces further leaves little scope for independent, democratic political process to flow unhindered. This, however, does not keep the political leaders away from blame. It is said, “Every prominent politician of the country has indulged at one time or another in the uncivilised practice of scuttling the constitutional process, in active collusion with dictators. While the military dictators invariably oppose the continuation of constitutional democracy, the overwhelming majority of politicians have acted as a pliable tool for the ‘cause’ and in the hands of the former.”

Benazir’s term would be better remembered for her direct encouragement to Talibani forces in Afghanistan. The political scene of Afghanistan after the Soviet tanks rolled out of the country (1989) was one of utter chaos. Various ethnic groups fought against the pro-communist regime of Najibullah until he was overthrown in 1992. Kabul fell to Tajik leader Burhanuddin Rabbani and his military commander Ahmad Shah Masud, and Uzbek forces from the north under General Dostum. Pashtuns, by far the largest ethnic group, rallied to regain control over Kabul, under the command of Gulbuddin Hikmetyar. Afghanistan was a virtual war zone with various tribal warring factions hitting out against each other ion the most barbaric traditions. “The warlords seized homes and farms, threw out their occupants and handed them over to their supporters. The commanders abused the population at will, kidnapping young girls and boys for their sexual pleasure robbing merchants in the bazaars and fighting and brawling in the streets. Instead of refugees returning from Pakistan, a fresh wave of refugees began to leave Kandahar for Quetta”.

In this state of affairs Taliban emerged in Afghanistan by the end of 1994. The emergence of Taliban was the product of time as their agenda was to restore order, bring peace, disarm the highly armed society, enforce Sharia and protect Afghanistan’s Islamic character. The Taliban as their name suggests are Islamic students and were composed

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55 Ibid., p. 22.
of younger generation of Pakistani-Afghans. In other words, they grew up and were indoctrinated in the refugee camps in Pakistan. Their educational needs were catered by thousands of Madrassas inside Pakistan funded lavishly by the numerous multiple foreign agencies and operated by Pakistani Islamist party like the Jamaat-e-ulema Islam (JUI).\textsuperscript{56} Underlying the rhetoric of Islam and Sharia was a virulent kind of “anti western, anti American and anti-Hindu values”.\textsuperscript{57} The political ally of Benazir Bhutto and leader of right wing party Jamait-i-ulema-i-Islam-F (JUI-F) of Maulana Fazl ur-Rahman took a personal interest in the affairs of Taliban. He was instrumental in opening up contacts between the Government of Pakistan and the Taliban fighters.\textsuperscript{58}

The Jamaat-e-ulema Islam had a strong support base among the Pashtuns of North West Frontier Province and Baluchistan. Its biggest strength was the chain of Madrassas where Afghan jihadis along with their ethnic cousins studied together. Samiul Haq the head of another faction of Jamaat-e-ulema Islam(s) said, “Even before the Pakistani government had an Afghan policy, we were sending our Mujahids to fight alongside the Afghan Mujahidin. We did not need the ISI; the ISI and the CIA needed us”.\textsuperscript{59} The Pakistani Pshtuns who fought hand in hand with the Taliban were most suited to fight the Afghan jihad due to ethnic fraternity and sectarian unity with the Afghans across the border.

Pakistani help to the band of religious students from its Islamic seminaries was one of royal patronage. Maulana Fazlur Rehman’s (JUI) the coalition partner of Benazir’s government was made the chairman of the National Assembly’s Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs. It is this official capacity which empowered him to gain access to Taliban’s core. Slowly there emerged a strong business interest between Pakistani truckers and Taliban who were paid a monthly stipend for clearing roads and guarantying


\textsuperscript{58} Abbas, Pakistan’s Drift, n. 5, p. 154.

security of their men and material.60 Husain Haqqani quoting various sources puts forward the idea that Benazir Bhutto was "slowly sucked" into supporting the Taliban by the ISI, and that the government of Pakistan had second thoughts about encouraging them. Besides, there were also media reports about Benazir's Interior minister Nasirullah Babar assisting the Taliban with funds and logistical help.61 Both Bhutto and Babar were keen not to involve the ISI in Afghan affairs, consciously aware of its dubious role in fueling discontent against her during her first stint in office.62 Babar provided official funds from government ministries for logistical support to the Taliban under the guise of facilitating a trade route to central Asia. The Afghan Trade Development Cell was set up for this purpose. The Director of the above Cell along with Pakistani officials from Civil aviation, telecom railway services, Pakistan radio and national bank of Pakistan traveled by road from Quetta to Turkmenistan after the capture of Heart by the Taliban fighters in 1995. Various government corporations and ministries re-directed funds to help Taliban in new projects from resources meant to develop Pakistan's economy.63 Thus, Pakistan delivered almost everything from tin plates to rucksacks to communication lines with the Islamists. The ultimate design was the creation and sustenance of a well equipped army which Pakistan can call its own.64

So great was the bonhomie with Afghan forces that not only were their airports repaired, internal wireless network setup and road and electric supply lines restored - but also work was done bringing Kandahar under the Pakistan telephone grid. This implied that Kandahar could be connected from any part of Pakistan as a domestic call using the Code 081, just as is done for Quetta.65 Even technical support was provided to Radio Afghanistan by Radio Pakistan. Thus continuous inputs from Pakistani side forged deep

60 Haqqani, Between Mosque and Military, n. 18, p. 240.
61 See, Times of India, September 8, 1998.
62 Rashid, Taliban, n. 54, p. 184. The author says that Naseerullah Babar wanted to free the Afghan policy from the ISI.
63 Ibid., p. 185.
65 See, Rashid, Taliban, n. 54, pp. 184-185.
links with the Taliban whose families in refugees camps carried Pakistani identity cards.  

Apart from ideological reasons the intense Pakistani interest in the 1990's was to ensure a pro-Pakistani regime in Kabul and enjoy "strategic depth" against its enemy India. Strategic depth for the Pakistani army meant a military strategy which enables the soldiers of Pakistan to retreat in a safe place with arms and ammunition support in case of a prolonged war with India. Secondly, for Pakistan a friendly regime in Afghanistan would provide a safe haven for training Kashmiri militants and facilitate the Jehadi campaign in the valley. Pakistan believed that the Taliban would recognise the Durand line or drop Afghanistan's claims to parts of NWFP. More significantly, Pakistan's search for military parity with India and the desire to pay India back for its alleged role in dividing East Pakistan in 1971 accounts for its support to Jihadi forces against its neighbour.

A brief story of the Pak-Afghan relations in context of the Durand line would make things clear. Afghanistan soon after Pakistan's creation refused to recognise the Durand Line as the legitimate international boundary between the two states. It cast a solitary vote against Pakistan's admission to the United Nations and called for establishment of Pakhtoonistan. The year 1950 saw extremely tense relationship when Afghan parliament called the Durand Line an imaginary one and condemned the

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66 For a detailed discussion on Pakistani assistance to the Taliban, see William Maley (ed.), *Fundamentalism Reborn? Afghanistan and Taliban* (London: Hurst, 1998).

67 General Mirza Aslam Beg, explained the concept of strategic depth which meant '... hiding Pakistan's military assets in Afghanistan beyond the current offensive capabilities of the Indian military its pursuit has five assumptions: (a) in a crisis, Pakistan would have the leisure of time; (b) Pakistan would transfer its equipment to a place of its choosing; (c) logistical support for such an undertaking would always remain available; (d) the places west of Durand line would safe from Indian attacks; (e) Pakistan would dominate, maintain and sustain huge safe houses in areas hundreds of miles deep into Afghanistan. See, Rizwan Zeb, 'War Against Terror: Lessons for Pakistan', Unpublished paper, p. 304.


accidental bombing of an Afghan village close to the Pakistan border. Kabul made efforts to incite the local tribesman on the other side of the border to rise in open revolt against the Central Government leading to closure of the border. The Afghan nurtured deep resentment when they sensed that Pakistan after joining SEATO and CENTO has diverted much needed military assistance to Afghanistan.

The Taliban Upsurge

The Taliban which fostered Pashtun nationalism with a severe Islamic nature certainly influenced the Pashtuns. Recognising the Taliban and Sheltering them led to the dilution of border, between the two countries. Apart from opening up great possibilities of inter-regional trade and economic interdependence, it led to large influx of arms, local militias, drugs and narcotics. Many agreed that a Lebanon like civil war among various militias groups of Afghanistan would carry security risks and a possible involvement of foreign powers in the region. Talibanisation spilling into the porous borders pose a great threat to Pakistan’s stability. Besides drugs and arms smuggling, the radical Islamists have also made a strong presence in the region. Taliban rule in Afghanistan strengthened and reinforced the influence of the Deobandis, led by Fazlur Rehman’s JUI, who not only baptized the religious fighters but was also the Chief political influence in Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). It is reported, “The entry of secular politicians into FATA is practically banned whereas the Mullahs enjoy free entry”. The influence of the Mullah owes its origin to state patronage to Mosques and Madrassas and secondly to the principle of not allowing secular/non religious parties to extend their services in the region. The space created by the lack of participatory institutions and official patronage to Islamist radicals gave rise to Islamic militancy.

72 Ibid., p. 500. In an ethnically divided Afghanistan, the bloody civil war involved all major factions such as the Phastuns, the Northern Alliance Ahmad Shah Masud, the Shi’ite Hazaras and numerous other ethnic factions.
74 Ibid., p. 11. This view was that of HRCP activist Mr. Tariq Khan.

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which was trans-national in character, and this made the region a cocoon for local regional and international terrorists. Driven out of Sudan’s capital Khartoum due to American pressure Bin laden was brought to Jalalabad and given refuge as an honoured guest.

Soon after that Al Qaida became the umbrella organization of all jehadi outfits including Taliban and numerous Islamists groups fighting in the Kashmir valley like the Lashkar-e-Taiba, Harkat-ul-Mujahideen, Jaish-e-Mohammad, Hizb-ul-Mujahidden and many other groups based in Pakistan. “The battle inoculation” training, official support networks and flow of funds from oil rich west Asian states and affluent Muslim expatriates have sustained the Al Qaeda - Taliban combine and led to ‘religious mobilization and an extremists Islamist reorientation’. The partnership between Al Qaeda and Taliban sounded the death-knell for peace and stability not only for the region but to world at large. His jehadi volunteers wreaked havoc at the time and place of their choice. The Taliban and the Al Qaida groups were primarily accused of the 9/11 attacks, the 13 Dec 2001 Indian Parliament attack, the London bombings, half a doze assassination attempts on president Musharraf and numerous fidayaeen (suicide attacks) on political leaders and places of importance. The Taliban fighters have a formidable presence in Pakistan’s tribal zones and militant leaders like Haji Mohammad Omar and Baitullah Mahsud move freely and carryout training and recruitments in South Waziristan. The strategy adopted by the Al Qaida supremo, Bin Laden to placate the Taliban was one of “luck, money and diplomacy.”


76 See, Pradip Thakur, “Monster She created came back to take her life”, Times of India, December 29, 2007.


79 For details on Al Qaida and Taliban, see Intikhab Amir, “Holes in the pact”, The Herald (Islamabad), October 2006, pp.32-33.

80 Osama constantly flattered the Taliban leader, (Mullah Omar) building him a palace and going along with his rudimentarily educated hosts pretensions as commander of the faithful (which were formalized in a public ceremony in which he donned what was purported to be the prophet’s cloak, Piously preserved in
persuasion worked, and soon he became the hegemon of hundreds of foreign Islamists organisation under Al Qaeda, in Afghanistan. The ISI of Pakistan trained its volunteers (in the mid 1990's) in the same camp which Osama bin Laden used for his Islamist recruits. Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) chief Yasin Malik had acknowledged the role of ISI chief in the Kashmiri insurgency, so did the POK JKLF Chief Amanullah Kahn who talked of a gentlemen agreement with ISI. In 1989 the ISI received vast tracks of land to be used as militant training camps. This was evident when the Pakistani recruits for Kashmir were the ones who succumbed to their injuries in the American cruise missile attacks in 1998.

Terror Attacks in Kashmir Valley

Ever since partition of India in 1947 Kashmir problem is the single major political issue which continues to dictate the parameters of Indo-Pakistan relations. The issue of Kashmir is deeply rooted in history. The state of Jammu and Kashmir became a part of Indian Union when the Maharaja of Kashmir, backed by Sheikh Abdullah (leader of Kashmir National Conference and popular leader of Kashmiri Muslims) of that time acceded to be an integral part of India. While accepting the accession of Kashmir the political leadership of India made it known to the Maharaja of Kashmir that after clearing the invaders from across border the issue of accession should be on par with the wishes of the people. It is this condition which was attached as a footnote that was exploited by Pakistan in all international forums including the United Nations. Contesting India's claim, Pakistan has built up a case that accession of Kashmir to India was against the wishes of the overwhelming Muslim population. Thus, the issue of plebiscite or
referendum was raised by Pakistan every now and then even after Nehru withdrew the commitment to plebiscite after the 1954 USA-Pakistan defence agreement.  

There are numerous instances of cross border infiltration of Jehadi forces at different times. The Pakistan army, the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) and its Kashmir cell are allegedly behind planning and execution of infiltration plans. The infiltrated people consist of well trained recruits from various terrorist training camps with linkages to extremists’ organization both inside and outside Pakistan. Trained in the “schools of hate”, Pakistani nationals and Afghan Jihadis had joined the Kashmiri struggle in large number by the year 1992. The Government of India estimates that nearly 3,000 to 4,000 Mujahideen have infiltrated into the valley and out of the total figure of extremists 40 percent of the militants in Kashmir are Pakistani or Afghan and 80 percent are teenagers.

Thus, the indigenous, non-religious movement of the people of Kashmir was given the colour of Islamists crusade as attempts were made to bring the entire movement under Pakistani control. Very few would disagree that the recruitment of the jihadists from Pakistan’s side took place much before Benazir Bhutto took office and that she was not powerful enough to challenge the strong nexus between the military Islamists combine. But it is an over simplification to believe that a western educated independent women of her caliber, who is also the scion of an influential political dynasty had no say in managing her country’s foreign affairs with two important neighbours India and Afghanistan.

The perilous legacy of Benazir Bhutto’s regime was the encouragement given to Taliban and the results were before all of us to see, and secondly, making Kashmir a

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84 Media reports in 2001 revealed that four out of the five leading militant groups active in Kashmir valley were based in Pakistan. They were trained and supported by the Pakisatni military in cross-borer terrorism. See Ghulam Hasnaun, “Inside Jihad”, *Time Asia*, February 5, 2000. Also see, Stern, “Pakistan’s Jehadi Culture”, n. 69, p. 118.

jeihadists playground. The highly politicised state of Kashmir witnessed political unrest and insurgency in 1989, which remained largely a secular and issue-based such as the local demands for more jobs, more developmental aid, and Kashmiri reassertion in politics. But the movement was hijacked by heavily armed and ideologically brainwashed Islamists. The Kashmir policy of Benazir Bhutto made way for even foreign jihadists and their patron, the ISI to unleash terror in India.

When the Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) which was in the forefront in spearheading the Kashmir movement gave up violence as a means towards achieving freedom, the Hizb-ul-Mujahideen was organised in 1990 to take command with aid from across Pakistan. Pakistan was more than happy to do away JKLF owing to its secular ethos and call for complete independence. The Hizb-ul-Mujahideen, on the contrary, advocated Kashmir’s merger with Pakistan and Islamisation of the valley. Moreover, Pakistan preferred Hizb because it was not an indigenous player from the valley itself and thus easier to control. Nevertheless Hizb had a local face to camouflage the foreign connection and many Hizb leaders were assassinated under suspicious circumstances for opposing Pakistan-based Hizb-ul leaders. Abdul Majid Dar, who headed Hizb and opposed fidayeen attacks, for instance, was killed mysteriously. The ISI, which faced considerable problems while handling various militant groups in Afghanistan and their aspirations to region, did not want “a Kashmir PLO” In short, the resistance movement in Kashmir was hijacked by Pakistan, which did not leave it to the local commanders. Slowly the movement transformed from a self-determination struggle and became

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86 The policies advocated by the Taliban took Afghanistan into dark age. Some of the extremely retrogressive after effects of their rule was that women were made to disappear from Public view. Total segregation of sexes was ordered and punishments like flogging etc were given to those who dared to challenge. Clapping, kite flying, dancing & Music were banned, schools were shut down, photography stopped, and employment opportunities for women limited to the medical sector. No other interpretation of Islam other than theirs was tolerated. Continuous warfare led to psychological wounds visible in lowering of life expectancy, infant mortality and a maimed society. The plight of non-Muslims was one of sheer torture. The easy availability of arms and drugs deprived their society of peace and happiness and affected the regional stability. See Dupree Nancy Hatch, 'Afghan women under Taliban' in Maley William (ed.), Fundamentalism Reborn (London: C. Hurst, 1998).

87 The Hurriyat Conference is a conglomeration of thirty-odd Kashmir-based political parties.


89 Haqqaai, Pakistan, p.287
increasingly Islamic in tone and got linked to all secessionists and underground organisations.\textsuperscript{90}

Although the issue of Kashmir is deeply embedded in the official ideology of the Pakistani state, the jihadis from Pakistan are not involved in fighting for Kashmir alone. Many of them have established their presence in Philippines, Chechnya, Tajikistan, Bosnia, Yemen, Egypt and Algeria. But for the fear of a backlash from entrenched Islamists from within Pakistan, Benazir Bhutto did precious little despite western pressure to rein in the forces already unleashed during her tenure.\textsuperscript{91} Although the \textit{Harkat ul Ansar} was placed in the U. S. State Department’s list of global terrorist organisations, Benazir avoided taking action against the group operating under a new name, \textit{Harkat-ul-Mujahideen}.\textsuperscript{92} Conversely, her government tried hard to convince the world leaders with the standard Pakistani explanation that the brutal killing of all Kashmiris by the Indian army had attracted such groups to join the insurgency in the valley.\textsuperscript{93} According to sources, some 80,000 Pakistani volunteers who joined the Taliban to realise its dream of an Islamic revolution in Afghanistan also provided the ground for a Taliban-type interpretation of Islam inside Pakistan.\textsuperscript{94}

\textbf{Rise of Islamic Militancy in Pakistan’s Tribal Areas}

The areas in Pakistan which come under Federally Administered Tribal Areas or FATA include (1) Tribal areas of Peshawar district; (2) Tribal areas adjoining Kohat district; (3) Tribal areas adjoining Bannu district; (4) Dera ismail Khan district; (5) Bajaur Agency; (6) Orakzai Agency; (7) Mohmand Agency; (8) Khyber Agency; (9) Kurram Agency; and (10) North and South Waziristan Agency.\textsuperscript{95} Mid 1990s witnessed

\textsuperscript{90} A.G. Noorani, “Contours of the militancy” \textit{Front-line}, 17-20, September 30, 2000, p.9
\textsuperscript{93} Husain Haqqani, \textit{Pakistan between Mosque and Military}, n 18, p. 237.
\textsuperscript{95} The above mentioned FATA areas were referred as such in Article 246(c) of the 1973 constitution.
an Islamic movement in these areas which challenged the state, its political authority its right to define criminal behaviour and judicial institutions.\textsuperscript{96}

The movement which emphasized on the socio-religious reform was spearheaded by \textit{Tehrik-i-Nifaz-i-shariat-i-Muhammadi} (TNSM) and \textit{Tanzeem-i-Ittehad-i-ulema-i-Qabali} (TIUQ). The movement of TNSM which was headed by Sufi Muhammad emphasized on Shariah and Quran to be made sole basis for restructuring the society. The activists led the Pakistani government to rethink on Pakistan penal code. A “near insurgency” and “virtual rebellion” started in Malakand, Peshawar and Swat valley in pursuit of its demand for a Shariah-based system in place of Pakistan penal code.\textsuperscript{97} Although the movement by TIUQ and TNSM looked overtly religious since Islamic symbolism was widely used and the various programmes demanded by the two parties was determined by Islamic interpretation, the base of the movement was wider since it aimed at economic and social development issues also.\textsuperscript{98} The TIUQ, for instance, owed its growth to “a deep sense of deprivation, unemployment, delay in dispensation of justice and the role of vested interests.”\textsuperscript{99}

The Pakistan Government’s suspension of “transit trade” between Afghanistan and Pakistan in 1995 and the state’s assertion over controlling the border economic transactions put the inter-regional trading activity in jeopardy. The Pakistan Government by imposing national customs act on all cross-border trade and creating the new police posts reversed the 1965 Afghan Transit Trade agreement, which had provisions for Afghanistan to receive goods and shipments through Karachi which were not traded in exchange of Afghan products needed by Pakistan. In any case, the rise of Taliban in neighbouring Afghanistan also had its influence in the growth of radical Islam in the


\textsuperscript{97} Ibid., p. 127.

\textsuperscript{98} According to Sufi Muhammad, leader of the TNSM, whosoever accepted Pakistani law, supported democracy or who did not wear the black turban was a Kafir.

tribal areas. In fact, the TNSM had some external support from Arab and Afghan mercenaries who were the by-product of the Afghan civil war.\textsuperscript{100}

The Pakistani support to extremist forces during the anti-Soviet jihad, during the civil war and later to the Taliban rule had sufficiently radicalized local Islam in the entire region. Another issue which supplemented Islamic conservatism was that during the Afghan civil war there were hundreds of foreign militants who had entered into matrimonial alliances with the local tribes in the FATA region. Even after the ouster of Taliban, many fugitive militants continued to retreat into FATA areas and made generous monetary rewards in exchange for support and shelter provided by the local tribal people. The village elders explain this warmth of sheltering outsiders as a part of their religious tradition.\textsuperscript{101} This unprecedented sympathy for the Islamic cause is perhaps one of the causes of Osama bin Laden’s presence in the area and Al Qaida’s successful operations against Western and un-Islamic forces.\textsuperscript{102}

**Growth of Fundamentalist Forces during Sharif’s Second Term**

After Benazir’s premature dismissal from office in November 1996, Nawaz Sharif’s PML-N emerged the winner in the polls held in February 1997.\textsuperscript{103} After the demise of Zia in 1988, power in Pakistan alternated between the two main stream political parties, the PPP and PML. The right wing considered as marginal third force played an extremely important role in street politics, whipping public emotions on issues like Kashmir, Afghanistan, nuclear weapons and Islamisation. Between the PPP and Nawaz Sharif-headed Islamic Democratic Alliance, the latter was considered a favourite

\textsuperscript{100} Robert La Port, “Pakistan in 1996: Starting over again”, *Asian Survey*, Vol. 37, No. 2 (February 1997), p. 120.


\textsuperscript{102} Pakistani authorities have avoided an all out war with local militants (Taliban) groups in the tribal areas for fear of alienating Pashtuns who constitute more than 15 per cent of Pakistan’s population. The Pashtuns make up 25 percent in the Pakistan army. The government of Pakistan despite US pressure has kept the Punjabi elite units away from the tribal war zone. The fear is to prevent the transformation of the Afghan autonomy movement into full fledged call for Independence. See, Haroun Mir, “It’s Payback Time”, *Times of India*, April 4, 2008.

\textsuperscript{103} The 1997 general elections saw a very low voter turn out at around 30 per cent which indicated voter’s fatigue or disillusionment with the periodic dismissal of elected representatives before their term. Nawaz Sharif returned to power in 1997 with a two-third majority.
to champion the cause of Islamisation. For the Islamists were apparently impressed by the gesture of Nawaz Sharif who visited the grave of General Zia ul-Haq and had pledged to complete the Islamisation of life in Pakistan. The legacy of Zia’s decade long military rule continues to hover like a multi-headed monster over Pakistan’s civil-democratic institutions.

History repeated itself when the democratically elected Nawaz Sharif government was dismissed in 1999 October in a bloodless coup by General Pervez Musharaff. His rule did not reflect a severance of ties with the past policies, nor was it a trend-setter for democratic conventions. In short, his years in power or pattern of governance reflected that it was “old wine in an old bottle with just a new label”. Nawaz Sharif hardly made any conscious actions to improve the prevailing political culture of Pakistan which was that of hounding opposition members, judges, journalists and businessmen who opposed him. Benazir’s husband was made answerable before the Accountability Commission and he ensured that the opposition People’s Party fails to launch a movement against him. His attempt to gag free press was highlighted when he punished Friday Times editor, Najam Sethi for criticising his rule. Finally, his clash with the judiciary triggered a political crisis. He engineered divisions within the judiciary and the disgraceful conduct of PML-N supporters outside the Court premises further weakened the pillars of democracy. It is rightly said, “for a transition to move from military to civilian rule, and hence toward democracy, the country requires an impartial and unimpaired judicial conscience and a clear sense of the place and predilections of civil society. It therefore, also requires a legislative -- indeed constitutional -- foundation that ensures the judiciary an autonomous place in the state. Although the Courts have helped define this process, grounding has yet to be firmly established”.

104 Nawaz Sharif who led the anti-PPP Islamic Democratic Alliance (IJI) was considered a protégé of General Zia-ul Haq. He was more acceptable to the army than Benazir though he fell out with his benefactors over certain issues later.

105 Abbas, Pakistan’s Drift, n. 5, p. 159.

106 Nawaz Sharif slowly moved towards Political dictatorship when he took away the right of the legislators to express dissent. The undemocratic move was opposed by the Supreme Court and thus Sharif was eager to avenge it.

107 Newberg, Judging the State, n. 15, pp. 231-232.
Sharif's personal aggrandisement plans were successful after he deprived the President of the right to dissolve elected governments and parliament and armed the Prime Minister the right to appoint the Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces. The 13th Amendment to the Constitution empowered him to secure any possible political interference by the President, but instead he used this constitutional safeguard to entrench himself in power.\textsuperscript{108} The 14th Constitutional Amendment though meant to check political horse-trading aimed at inculcating great fear among his party members for violating party discipline and its rules of behaviour. The punishment which the elected members attract for abstaining or violating party's policy towards a Bill was immediate disqualification. This earned the parliamentary faction of the ruling PML the title of being an "enslaved majority".\textsuperscript{109} The country's optimism of getting back to democratic traditions was dampened by his stand off with the judiciary which engaged the government in avoidable tension and derailed its agenda on good governance. The centralisation of power and denial of political rights to members of parliament led to alleged arbitrary rule and exposed his government to military intervention.

Another issue of incalculable significance to the balance of power in the region was the issue of Pakistan going nuclear. First of all, it was linked to Pakistan's bid to elevate its status and prestige in the eyes of the Muslim world. Even though the nuclear programme traces back to the days of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, the status changed on May 28, 1998. It is on this day Pakistan detonated five nuclear devices in the Chagai hills of Baluchistan in response to India's detonations in Thar desert. The unprecedented celebrations all over Pakistan on the issue of Pakistan matching India's nuclear status explains the importance of the India factor in its politics and to the extent Pakistan's policies are determined by it.\textsuperscript{110} The decision to expose its nuclear status even at the face of stringent economic sanctions from the US and West was largely due to pressure from the religious right which was too much for the government to ignore. As the Nawaz Sharif government pondered for 17 days, there were massive protests by the conservative


elements with the backing of the people who urged the government to retaliate or perish.\textsuperscript{111}

\textbf{Sharif's Sharia Bill}

Nawaz Sharif introduced the 15\textsuperscript{th} Constitutional Amendment meant to make the Holy Quran and Sunnah supreme law of the land. The bill was passed with a two-third majority in the National Assembly, even as minority organisations human right groups and certain civil society association publicly opposed the move. The clauses of the CA-15 bill are

1. the holy Quran and Sunnah of the Holy Prophet shall be the Supreme law in Pakistan;

2. The federal government shall be under an obligation to take steps to enforce the Shariat, to establish salat (prayer), to administer Zakat, to promote what is right (according to the Quran) and to forbid what is wrong;

3. The provisions of this article shall have effect notwithstanding anything contained in the constitution, any law or judgment of any court.\textsuperscript{112}

The 15\textsuperscript{th} Amendment notes that for the purposes of Islamisation only a simple majority is required. The government which claims to be true torch bearers of Islam actually was criticized for converting the absolute mandate to a virtual dictatorship by using Islam. In a hard hitting editorial Newsline editor wrote “Islam is in danger in Pakistan, yet again. But not from the country’s masses, the majorities of whom follows the tenets of their faith and are good human beings, besides being Muslims, Christians or Hindus. It faces a threat from its arrogant, self-seeking, corrupt leaders who have milked this country dry, sown the seeds of corruption ethnicity, sectarianism and violence .... Now that the country is reaping the wages of their unlimited greed and excesses Mr. Sharif waves the flag of Islam as if it were a magic wand that could sweep away the

\textsuperscript{111} Mayed Ali, "Failings of Nwaz Regime". The Nation, October 24, 1999.

\textsuperscript{112} Pleshov, Islamism and Travails of Democracy, n. 109, p. 232.
country's economic meltdown in a jiffy."\textsuperscript{113} The editor remained critical of Sharif's who she says had visions of becoming all powerful \textit{Ameeul Momineen} Zia is long dead, but his spirit still hounds Pakistan's democratically elected leaders.

The 15\textsuperscript{th} Amendment to the Constitution was seen as a threat to federation and the smaller provinces were apprehensive of Punjabi domination over them. The bill sought to empower the federal government to issue directives and make laws for the implementation of Islamisation. The bill gave overwhelming authority to punish any state functionary for non-compliance with its order and there is no judicial restraint on the powers of the federal government to enforce principles of Quran and Sunnah. The bill proposed to re-establish \textit{Salat} committees set up by Zia ul Haq and form vigilant committees to enforce Islamic practices.\textsuperscript{114} The state machinery was to be used to crush any opposition to Islamisation measures and this raised fears of a civil war and imposition of the Taliban version of Islam in Pakistan.

The threat of sectarianism and a civil war was perceived because not all Muslims have monolithic views on Shariat. There exist various schools of Islamic jurisprudence and each school or \textit{Fiqh} determines different norms of behaviour. "Some of them consider \textit{Fiqh} a part of Shariat, others – its concretisation, while the third maintain that the \textit{Fiqh} begins where Sharia ends. There is an opinion that Shariat is only a composition of the rules regulating external conduct of the Muslims having no concern of their inner motivation and religious consciousness."\textsuperscript{115} There is major difference on this issue between Shias and Sunnis and thus the fear of sectarian clashes. The bogey of Talibanisation was raised because Islamic zealots were sure to get state patronage, and Pakistan being a friend of the Taliban was prepared at that point of time to bear with the spiritual spill over in the own country even though it would adversely affect the religious minorities and women.\textsuperscript{116}

\textsuperscript{113} See, Rehana Hakim, "Editor's Note", \textit{Newsline}, September 1998, p. 7. The writer makes a passionate plea to Mr. Sharif who was playing to the gallery and was ready to trigger a civil war to grab complete power, not to indulge in low politics since it is not Islam but Pakistan - which is n danger.

\textsuperscript{114} See "Cover Story", \textit{Newsline}, September 1998.

\textsuperscript{115} Pheslov, \textit{Islamism and Travails of Democracy}, n. 109, p. 233.

\textsuperscript{116} For a discussion of the impact of Islamisation on the lives of Pakistani women, see Anita Weiss, "Women's Position in Pakistan", \textit{Asian Survey}, XXV, No. 8 (August 1985), pp. 867 -880.
The multifarious interpretation of Islam regarding the status of minorities along with unbridled power to interpret Islam was bound to make lives of minorities miserable. Doubts were raised that the minorities may be asked to pay Jazia (tax) and labeled Zimmi or there could be laws prohibiting their employment in the army or other higher offices. Last but not the least attempts could be made to restrict their religious activities.¹¹⁷ There were fears that the majority-minority divide would increase and the bill would ensure a second class status to the minorities in the country of their birth.

The Shariat bill had provisions which made constitutional amendments much simpler. The bill empowered the government to remove all obstacles towards Islamisation by an amendment. Such a process was not to require a two-third majority, but only a simple majority of members taking part in the voting. In an event of rejection by either House of the Parliament to the proposed amendment, the bill could still be enforced in a joint-session of the parliament by a simple majority. Nowhere in the world was the procedure of amendments made so easy and simpler. It needs mentioning that constitution after all is an extremely serious document, which lays down the guidelines for governing the country. Amendments to the constitution are carried out in extreme cases according to the need of time, but after great deal of discussion and critical review, Critics in Pakistan viewed this move as an attempt to negate the role of the Upper house which safeguards the right of the federal units. The fear of Punjabisation spread among the federating units since Punjab enjoyed majority in the National Assembly. Thus the nagging apprehension that Shariat Bill carried the seeds of disintegration of the federal system was not an exaggeration.

The real purpose behind introducing the Shariat Bill was to create an absolutely powerful executive, which could force the judiciary to endorse its moves without a murmur of protest. Asma Jehangir, Chairperson Human Rights Commission of Pakistan exposed the real intention of the government by calling their entire efforts as “typical Zia style of functioning.” She added, “The government claims that the real purpose of the

¹¹⁷ The fears about the persecution of minorities were sounded by Bishop Bonaventure of Pakistan. See Zaman Khan, “This Amendment will give the Rulers unbridled power to Interpret Islam”, Newsline, September 1998. For blasphemy cases against minorities, see “The State of Sectarianism in Pakistan”, ICG Asia Report, No. 95 (April 18, 2005), p. 26.
bill is to adjudicate, to provide justice to the people. If that was the case, so many other amendments to the Constitution could have been carried out instead of the Shariat Bill. In fact what the bill does is provide the executive with the power to get rid of any judge it deems undesirable."118 As both of his grand experiments, the speedy trial courts in 1992 and the anti-terrorist bill to combat terrorism met with judicial disapproval, Nawaz Sharif became wary of the judicial activism. His obsession with judicial activism had much to do with the fear of the old corruption cases crumbling from the cupboards and resulting in his removal from office.119 Sharif, however, seemed determined not to give up and set out to clip first the powers of the President army, Parliament and then the judiciary.120

Moreover, the timing of the bill brought to the fore Nawaz Sharif’s political compulsions, especially in the wake of the breakdown of his political alliance with the Muttahida Qaumi Movement both at the federal and provincial level, leading to a vicious cycle of blood bath in Sindh. At the same time, problems facing the country were no less formidable: severe economic distress and the countrywide agitation by the fundamentalist parties and their fiery sermons and anti government, anti-American protests following the US missile attack on Osama bin Laden’s hide-out in Afghanistan.121

Nawaz Sharif used his Islamic card in an effort not to lag behind the fundamentalists. He extolled hundreds of religious leaders who had gathered in Islamabad for a government sponsored convention on the implementation of Sharia, to be true warriors of Islam. Addressing the gathering Sharif asked the religious leaders to spread all over Pakistan and stand against all the forces who are opposing the bill.122 This show of strength of the religious right can be compared with the besieging of the


119 The bill gave police the authority to conduct raids without search warrants and even had provision for death penalty. While Sharif believed that the bill was the “only option” to combat terror, others condemned the legislation, which would allow police to make “arbitrary arrests on mere suspicion.” Keessen’s Record of World Events (formerly the Keessen’s Contemporary Archives): Pakistan, Vol. 43 (August 1997), p. 41775.


122 Nawaz Sharif’s appeal was echoed by Senator Maulana Abdul Sattar Niazi who raised the religious tempo by demanding that all opponents of the proposed amendment be hanged. Ibid.
Supreme Court, during his standoff with the judiciary. The bill was passed in the lower house with minor changes but he could not get it passed in the senate owing to the issue of retirement of senators. Sharif had no options but to wait for fresh elections of the senators in 2000, which were to give him the much needed support. As his political fate would have it, his government fell in 1999 and with it, the Shariat bill was kept a backburner.

**Sectarian Violence during Sharif's Regime**

Nawaz Sharif's rule witnessed escalation of violence between the rival Sunni and Shia sects, which reached the peak in 1997 when Pakistan was all set to celebrate 50th anniversary of its independence. In Punjab alone more than 170 people were killed in a few weeks and the nature of killings often involved bomb blast and bloody massacres during prayers and religious services. The unending spate of sectarian violence which swept Pakistan and Punjab in particular led to the passage of the controversial anti-terrorist bill designed to cope with the fratricidal war. The Bill signed by President Leghari on August 18, 1997 gave the security agencies wide ranging powers to carry out raids without search warrants, to arrest and even evoke severe punishment measures like death penalty for involvement in terrorism.

The Sunni-Shia animosity with its resultant sectarian crisis owes its origin to the imposition of statist Islam. Pakistan being a Sunni majority country patronised Sunni Islam and this gave an impetus to Sunni fundamentalism. Sectarian conflict in Pakistan is related to the place of Islam in public life. Zia ul Haq's Islamic rule left behind painful memories of ethnic and sectarian violence. The exploitation of Islam for political gains is not a new phenomenon in Pakistan. Successive rulers both civilian and military used Islam to mobilise public support and win political legitimacy. Article 2 of the 1973 Constitution declares Islam as the official state religion and sovereignty belongs to Allah:

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124 The Provincial government in Punjab had also taken a series of measures like establishment of local protection committees and imposing a ban on adult males riding pillions on bikes etc. But these measures were not enough to combat violence. See, Keesings Record of World Events: Pakistan, Vol. 43 (August 1997), p. 41775.

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All existing laws shall be brought in conformity with the injunctions of Islam as laid down in the holy Quran and Sunnah .... And no law shall be enacted which is repugnant to such injunctions (Article 227).

Thus, the ultimate objective of the constitution is Islamisation and Islam is also the basis of state legitimacy. However, the terminology, functions, designs and implications of an Islamic system is subject to endless debates and sectarian interpretations. Official patronage of Islam has led to "political, cultural and ideological confusion". When the state interferes in matters of personal belief and debates on issues like who is a Muslim and who is not, it sends shivers down the spine of minority sects like the Ahmadies, Shias and others. Between the Shias and Sunnis, for instance, there exist certain core historical, jurisprudential and ideological differences, which turn the former suspicious of the majority Sunnis and strengthen particularist identities. The sectarian flare-ups in Pakistan during the 1990s were thus the result of the deepening sense of alienation and mutual fear even though the both communities had contributed equally to the creation and economic development of Pakistan.

As discussed in the chapter I, it was during the Zia period the religious lobby mainly the Deobandi ulema and the Jamaat-i-Islami lobbied for rigid interpretations of Islamic injunctions and jurisprudence which were perceived by the Shia community as partisan. The Hudood ordinances, the Blasphemy laws, the promulgation of zakat and ushr ordinance and many other divisive drives like reserving seats for Sunni ulema in the Council of Islamic ideology (leading to resignation of Shia members), filling up the Sharia courts with members of the conservative Sunni clergy, establishment of the Sharia faculty in the Islamic university with no Shia presence, propagation of official Islam in the state media and print medium, propagation of Islamic values in schools, making prayers mandatory in offices and educational institutions thereby making the Sunni-Shia identification visible/perceptible and discriminatory rules and regulations requiring job

127 Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the father of Pakistan was a Shia and many of his associates were Shias. Even after independence three head of states Muhammad Ali Jinnah (1947-48) Iskander Mirza (1956-58) and General Yahya Khan (1969-70) were Shias. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto also came from a Shia background. They contributed immensely towards the economic well being of their nation. The Shias like the Gokals Habibs and Ispahanis have made their mark in the field of shipping, Banking and air lines.
applications, passport, identity cards applicants to declare their religion. Rules and measures like this when pursued by the state made the Shias isolated and created volatile sectarian divisions. Patronage and co-option towards Sunni Islam led to extremist mobilisations among the Shias of Pakistan as well.

**Politcisation of Sectarian Identities**

In the Pakistani context, Islamisation meant the imposition of Sunni point of view because Sunnis constituted an over-whelming majority. The alienation of Shias was thus the inevitable consequence of the growth in Sunni fundamentalism based on the traditional theological differences. Likewise, attempts were made during the Ahmedi controversy by the religious leadership to exclude them from the Muslim community, had a strong bearing on sectarian conflict. Sunni orthodox leaders spearheaded a campaign to exclude Shias from being called Muslims Sipah-I Sahaba Pakistan once declared that “If Islam is to be established in Pakistan then Shi’is must be branded Kafirs (infidels)”.

The Ahmediya controversy heightened sectarian discourse on the question of who is a real Muslim, and who is not. Sunni fundamentalism implied the doctrinal negation of Shia belief. Even if the state officially remained an Islamic state non-Sunnis felt gradually alienated. Both the sects had highly organized and armed militant organization designed to work towards protection of their respective interests. The Sunnis rediscovered their old identity under the aegis of Sipah-e Sahaba while the Shias organized themselves under Tahrirk-i-Nifaz-i-fiqh-i-Jafariyya (TNF).

It is believed that the Iranian revolution of 1978-79 and establishment of the clerical regime in Teheran gave an impetus to the political mobilisation among the Shias of Pakistan. For, they have always turned towards Iran for spiritual and cultural leadership and were naturally emboldened by the success of the Iranian revolution. The achievements of the revolution were extolled in radical publications of the Shias, and the TNFJ became the center of religio-political protest. In the July 1980, Shias from all over

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130 SATP Terrorist Groups of Pakistan *Sipah-e-Sahaba* see, http://www.Satp.org/satporgtp/countris/Pakistan/terrorist

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Pakistan marched on to various government ministries for the enforcement of Shia *fiqh* for Shias, not to enforce *Zakat* according to Hanafi law and pressed for the effective representations of Shias in government. Iran’s policy of “export of Shi’i revolution” coincided with the new found activism of the Shias, who were already accused of harbouring plans to implement Shi’i laws. This state of affairs was perceived by the majority Sunni community as threatening. However, what precipitated the sectarian divide was the US policy of containing post-revolution Iran. American interests mainly lay in protecting the oil rich gulf Sheikhdoms against the deleterious effects of Khomeini-led revolution. To counteract the potential Iranian influence in its surrounding region, America covertly and overtly encouraged the Sunni brand of Islam already active in Pakistan. This explains why the US chose not to react to the march of Taliban actively backed by Pakistan and its subsequent seizure of power in Kabul.131

During the years 1994-96, the US was supportive of the Taliban since Washington saw the latter as anti-Iran and anti-Shia. Apart from trying to neutralise Iran’s potential influence in Afghanistan, the US Afghanistan policy was also guided by its interests in securing energy sources in Central Asia. The American oil giant UNOCOL’s proposed gas pipe line project from Turkmenistan to Pakistan in someway compelled US decision-makers to tolerate the presence of the Taliban militants and their backers in Pakistan. The Clinton administration was not favourably inclined towards an Iranian role (whether as an interlocutor or backer of warlords competing for hegemony) in post-Soviet Afghanistan. President Reagan was also influenced by the same conceptual framework when he encouraged Sunni fundamentalists against the Soviets in the aftermath of the latter’s invasion of Afghanistan.132

The role of print media and proliferation of sectarian literature, growth of sectarian affiliated mosques and *madarasas* and along with it, the sectarian organisations like the *Sipah-i-Muhammad* for the Shias and *Sipah-i-Sahaba* for the Sunnis radicalised the two

131 Soon after Taliban forces announced their capture of Kabul in 1996 September the US State department made friendly overtures towards it and sent an official to Kabul in its bid to establish diplomatic relations with the Pakistan backed Militias. State department spokesman Glyn Davies described the Taliban anti modern rather than anti-western and found nothing objectionable in the imposition of Islamic codes. See Rashid, *Taliban*, n.54, p. 166.

communities. Further, the efforts of sectarian organisations in introducing “new urban, text based and relatively standardized religious identity among people hitherto acquainted only with local forms of religious belief and practice” led to fundamentalist upsurge in the countryside.\textsuperscript{133}

The Islamic activism of both Sunni and Shia groups found great support in the Persian Gulf monarchies. There were entrenched links between Saudi Arabia and Sunni Pakistani activists and the Iranian Ulema and Shi’i madrasas in Pakistan. Most of these organisations operated independently of government control and 1,700 out of 2,463 registered Madrassas received financial grants and infrastructural support from outside Pakistan.\textsuperscript{134} Rabita Alam-i-Islam (Islamic World League) of Saudi Arabia spearheaded the funding programmes in an attempt to influence Islamic intellectual and cultural life across the Muslim world. In Pakistan their agenda was to promote Wahabism. The Saudi support to Sunni madrassas in Pakistan fitted well with its anti-Iranian regional policy. Primarily concerned at the growing Iranian influence among the Shias, Saudi Arabia used Pakistan for creating the “Sunni Wall” around Iran. The Saudi attempt to harden Sunni identity was thus based on its vested interests in pursuit of which, it tried to entice the Jamaat-i-Islam. But the Jamaat committed to the cause of forging Shia-Sunni fraternity under the rubric of Islamism since 1988 refused to be drawn into the Saudi game plan, which was exclusivist in nature.\textsuperscript{135} However, determined to put up an anti-Shi’i front, the Saudis invested in self-styled Islamist, Muhammad Salahuddin alias Israr Ahmed of Ahl-i-Hadith organisation.\textsuperscript{136}


\textsuperscript{134} Herald (October, 1996), p. 54.

\textsuperscript{135} The broad exclusivist approach of the Jamaat was evident in Maududi’s (Jamaat’s Amir) interpretation of Islamic history. He interpreted the “Martyrdom as a struggle of Islam in the path of justice and for the establishment of Islamic state. He eviscerated the battle of Karbala of all its symbolism myth, meaning that Shi’is associate with it transforming it into an Islamist episode that presaged his own”. In 1995 Jamaat leader Qazi Hussain Ahmad met Iranian President before unifying all Islamist parties to end sectarianism. See, Nasr, “The Rise of Sunni Militancy in Pakistan”, n. 137, pp. 158-159.

\textsuperscript{136} The Ahl-i-Hadith publications are Takbir, Muhaddith (Lahore), Tarjumanu’l-Hadith (Faisalabad), Sahifa-i-Ahl-i-Hadith (Karachi) al-Aitissam (Lahore) Ahd-i-Hadith (Lahore) and al-Badr (Sahiwal). Some of the anti-Shi’i books published during the period include Shi’i Hazrat ki Quran se Baghavat (Revolt of the Shi’is against Quran), Din Main Ghulluw (Extremism without Religion) and Shi’i Hazrat Ki Islam se Baghavat (Shi’is Revolt against Islam). Ibid., pp. 160-161.
Apart from Ahl-i-Hadith other Sunni based organisations like Irshad’u Dawah (guidance and call to Islam) its militant cousin, Lashkar-i-Tayyibah (Army of the pure), and the Deobandi Darul-ulem (seminary) raised the pitch of sectarian confrontation in Pakistan. The Wahabbis of Saudi Arabia and the Deobandis established a synergistic relationship. The extremist attitude of the Deobandists permeated the Tablighi Jamaat. The followers of Tablighi “were intolerant of other Muslims and especially Shi’ites, let alone adherents of other faiths. - - - They rejected modernity as anti-thetical to Islam, excluded women, and preached that Islam must subsume all other religion. The creed grew in importance after Pakistani military dictator Zia ul Haq encouraged Deobandis to Islamise Pakistan.”\(^{137}\) The Wahabbis who ignored other schools of Islamic thought singled out the Tablighi Jamaat for praise. The late Sheikh Abdal Aziz ibn Baz, who was the most influential Wahabi cleric in the late 20\(^{th}\) century praised the Tablighis for their good work and encouraged the Wahabi preachers to follow them in their missions so as to get their valuable guidance and advice.\(^{138}\) The Saudis took upon themselves the task of financing their transportation and all other expenses. It is true that the financial transactions of the Tablighi Jammatis are wrapped in mystery but there is no doubt that Saudi funds from the World Muslim League have benefited them.\(^{139}\)

The interplay between Shia-Sunni and Sunni doctrinal differences, the divisive role played by the external actors and the Sunni-specific Islamisation measures of Zia ul Haq resulted in the politicisation of sectarian identity. All this manifested in the growth of fundamentalist organisations from both the sects which carried the fratricidal war to unmanageable limits. The Islamic seminaries across Pakistan and particularly in Punjab produced militant sectarian groups, which actively participated in the sectarian war. Prominent of them are Ramzi Ahmad Yusuf’s international Islamist network, Harkat ul

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\(^{138}\) See, “Fatwa of Shaykh ‘Abdul’-Azeez ibn Baz regarding the Jamaa’ah at Tableegh”, Fatwa-Online.com, Safar 11, 1414 (July 31, 1993).

\(^{139}\) Alex Alexiev in his study has revealed that the Saudi organisations subsidised the Tablighi Jamaat’s mosque in Dewsbury England, which is the headquarters of all Talighis in Europe and he quotes Wahabi sources which paid Tabligh Missionaries in Africa Salaries higher than the European union pays teachers in Zanzibar. He has shown that Tablighis operate from Deobandi and Wahabi centers in the US and Europe. See Alexiev, “Tablighi Jamaat”, n. 145, p. 3.
Ansar (movement of the helpers of the Prophet), the Sunni Tahrik (Sunni Movement) Tanzim-i-Da’wah (organisation of the call), Lashkar-i-Jhangvi (Jahangvi’s army), Sawad-i-Azam-i-Ahl-i-Sunnat (majority of Sunnis), the Sunni Council, Sunni Jamiat-i-Tulabh (Sunni student Association), Pakistan Sunni Ittihad (Pakistan Sunni Alliance), Tahaffuz-i-Khatm-i-Nubuwat (protection of Finality of Prophethood), the Pakistan Shariat (Islamic Law Council) and the Sipah-i-Sahaba Pakistan (SSP Pakistan’s Army of the Companions of the Prophet). Shias who constitute nearly 15% of the population have a highly organised movement led by the Tehrik-i-Nifaz-i-fiqh-i-Jafariyya (Movement for the implementation of the Jafari law). The other Shia parties include the Imamia Student Organisation (ISO) and the militant Sipah-i-Muhammad Pakistan.

Both the sects indulged in an aggressive confrontational style of politics and the madrassas-trained ulamas of both the sects incite their respective followers to “rise take up arms and seek paradise by eliminating the enemies of Islam.” The Shia-based TNFJ had a religio-political agenda to assertain their separate identity to protect their different religious practices and prevent the Sunni majority government from binding them with Sharia-based interpretation that clashed with their fiqh Jafariya. Apart from demanding complete autonomy for Shia religious endowments and total freedom for public observance of Shia rituals like Azadari processions, the TNFJ also insisted on developing Pakistan’s closeness with Iran. It advocated for a policy where prominent Mujatahids and other Shia scholars from Iran should be invited to Pakistan just as Sunni scholars are welcomed from Saudi Arabia, and stressed that Pakistan should be rid of American control. Internally, the Shias were critical about the Zia’s Islamisation wherein the Shia jurisprudence was totally neglected or ignored. Asserting their rights as equal partners the, TNFJ demanded that any law enforced in Pakistan in the name of Islam had to be in


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accordance with the Hanafi fiqh for Hanafis and Shia fiqh for Shias. Furthermore, the party demanded Shia interpretations in the Council of Islamic Ideology and introduction of fiqh-e-Ahl (the fiqh of the Prophet's Household that is the fiqh Jafari) to be studied in the Islamic University syllabus. The absence of Shia publications from the government-controlled Institute of Islamic Research and the lack of Shia point of view in the Federal Shariat court were the other two issues raised by the organisation.  

The Shia counterpart of Sunni Sipah-I Sahaba, the Sipah-i-Muhammad operated with lot of vengeance, it believes in “Khoon ka badla Khoon” (an eye for an eye and exhorts its followers to eliminate the enemies of dushmanan-i-Hussain (enemies of Hussain) and attained martyrdom. This inevitably resulted in the periodic violence involving Sipah-i-Sahaba and Sipah-i-Muhammad in parts of Pakistan. The most aggressive among Sunnis is the Sipah-i-Sahaba, which was an offshoot of Jamaat-ulema-i-Islam, Fazlur Rehman group. The Sunnis were startled by the active mobilisation of their counterparts. Muhammad Qasim Zaman sums up the Sunni consternation in this way. He writes, “That Islam and its fundamental sources are to mean different things to different people is disquieting, for instance; it takes away the Sunni majority’s ability to prescribe what the religious law of the land would be, and perhaps even more grievously, it suggests that ‘Islam can, and should, have several competing yet equally valid because officially recognized forms’. The Sunni-led Sipah-i-Sahaba though formed as a local organisation to fight Shia land mafias in Jhang district in Punjab, spreads its roots throughout Pakistan. The madarassa trained highly orthodox ulemas of the SSS provided leadership to combat Shi’as at all levels and ensure a declaration from the state calling them non Muslims. Maulana Muhammad Tariq of the Sipah-i-Sahaba introduced a bill in the lower house of Pakistani Parliament which proposes to make any attack on the honour of the Prophet’s companions and his family a crime punishable by death. The intention behind the proposed bill according to the Sipah-i-Sahaba is to ensure sectarian...
harmony since the use of derogatory remarks against the companions of the Prophet was the chief cause of instigating riots. This provision was Shia-specific even though no mention was made of them. In the year 1991, Nawaz Sharif's government made death penalty mandatory for blaspheming the name of the Prophet.\textsuperscript{147} The Act declared that the injunctions of Islam, as laid down in the Holy Koran and Sunnah, to be supreme law of the land.

On the whole, the process of Islamisation initiated by General Zia left no institutions untouched from Islamic influence. Consequently, it was a Sunni state in its actions and spirit. Religious "revivalism" in Pakistan in the 1980's was not a revolt against conventions but was "confined to certain external apparatus of religion: religiously oriented political groups became more assertive and the state assumed a more affirmative and directive role in introducing and enforcing the orthodox practices and traditional rituals of Islam as Public policies. Similarly, the proliferation of state-sponsored or voluntary associations with explicit religious goals and the increasing and more frequent use of religious texts and traditions as primary referents in socio-cultural and political discourse can be viewed as useful guides to determine the public role of religion irrespective of whether one regards them as products of genuine religious inspiration or political expediencies."\textsuperscript{148}

Islamic activism was followed by the rise in sectarian consciousness, sectarian organizations sectarian controversies and violent conflicts. Islamisation in Pakistan meant "shariatisation" since the emphasis was not on the principles of democracy, freedom, tolerance, equality, liberty and social justice, but on the enforcement of Sharia.\textsuperscript{149} Introduction of statist Islam provoked sectarian conflict because it raised two fundamental questions: firstly, which school of Islamic law would the state patronise and secondly, what would be the status of those who differ doctrinally and juristically from the state's interpretations?


\textsuperscript{149} Ibid., p. 108.
In sum, the protracted Shia-Sunni hostility that at one stage threatened fragmentation of Pakistan had its causation deeply entrenched in rigid sectarian division radicalised by the state through its policy of Islamisation. This explains why the civilian government of Nawaz Sharif failed in its efforts to contain the recurrence of sectarian violence. Backed by strong political support in his home province of Punjab, when Sharif undertook strict measures against the sectarian extremists, he became the target of an assassination attempt allegedly by a militant Sunni group *Lashkar-e-Jhangvi* in 1999.\(^1\) The fratricidal war not only undermined the social fabric and the prospects of cohesive national identity, it also posed serious challenges to the governance and state stability.

**Pakistan’s Taliban Policy**

Pakistan under Nawaz Sharif persisted with a pro-active policy towards Afghanistan first by patronising the Taliban and then, encouraging it to occupy areas from its rivals. The Pakistan-Afghanistan border became the easiest route for Taliban forces to operate and a major portion of training infrastructure for Pakistani jihadis was relocated across the border into Afghanistan.\(^2\) Eventually, Pakistan was successful in attaining its long-term objective of establishing a vassal regime in Kabul in 1997. By the end of 1998, Taliban had not only consolidated its hold over Kabul, but also occupied the northern town of Mazar-i-Sharif thereby bringing the entire Afghanistan except Panjshir valley under its control. With a client government in its backyard, Pakistan pursued a low-intensity proxy war against India for the liberation of Kashmir and at the same time keeping Kabul outside the orbit of New Delhi’s influence. “Pakistan’s military establishment”, writes an analyst, “has always approached the various wars in and around Afghanistan as a function of its main institutional and national security interests: first and foremost, balancing India, a country with vastly more people and resource, whose elites at least in Pakistani eyes, do not fully accept the legitimacy of Pakistan’s existence.”\(^3\)

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\(^1\) *Lashkar-e-Jhangvi* is a splintered group from *Sipahe Sahaba* which is an orthodox Sunni based sectarian party.

\(^2\) Haqqani, *Between Mosque and Military*, n. 18, p. 299.

In the deadly war of captures and betrayals, the Taliban was backed by the ISI and the Pakistani diplomats. When 2,500 heavily armed Taliban troops moved into Mazar-i-Sharif, officials from the Pakistani establishment flew into Taliban territory in an effort to help them negotiate various terms of agreement with its rival factions. Mazar-i-Sharif fell after a bloody battle and massacres of at least 2,000 Hazara civilians.\(^{153}\) The Taliban’s assault on Mazar evoked strong Iranian outrage since Taliban captors killed all the nine Iranian diplomats held hostage from the Iranian consulate after seizing the city. Iranian anger was directed against the Taliban guerillas and the failure on the part of the Pakistani government which had promised a safe exit for their diplomats.\(^{154}\) Despite Pakistani denials of any kind of role, Teheran continued to assert that Pakistan’s game plans in its immediate neighbourhood was to contain the Iranian influence.

In the immediate aftermath of the Taliban victories, the foreign minister Gohar Ayub Khan issued a statement on 25\(^{th}\) May 1997 extending official recognition to the extremist forces. He said, “We feel that the new government fulfils all criteria for de jure recognition. It is now in effective control of most of the territory of Afghanistan and is representative of all ethnic groups in the country.”\(^{155}\) Not only did Pakistan legitimise the government of Taliban calling it “broad based”, it also persuaded the Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to follow suit.\(^{156}\) Further, Pakistan’s ISI extended logistical assistance worth Rs. 2 billion and ISI officers made number of visits to Kandhar to reinforce Pakistani and Afghan soldiers to facilitate the fall of Bamiyan from the Hazaras.\(^{157}\) In short, Pakistan’s role in Afghan affairs was not limited to indoctrination by its religious parties; it provided base, volunteers, arms and other logistical support to the Taliban. If Taliban made steady advances into Mazar-i-Sharif and other areas of western and Northern Province in spite of hostile neighbours like. Iran,

\(^{153}\) “Afghanistan: Crisis of Impurity: The Role of Pakistan, Russia and Iran in Fueling the civil war”, Human Rights Watch (July 2001), p.14


\(^{155}\) See, Ahmed Rashid, Taliban, n. 54, p. 58.

\(^{156}\) Pakistan was impatient to see the end of the Afghan civil war with Taliban as its head and in the process the establishment overlooked Talibans over-domineering attitude while dealing with the Uzbeks and Hazaras. The Taliban regime was anything but not broad based.

\(^{157}\) Rashid, Taliban, n. 54, p. 73.
Russia and Central Asian republics, it was largely due to the direct involvement of Pakistani army and its security agencies.158

In West Asia, the Muslim Brethren and the Saudi-based World Muslim League organised “Islamic” humanitarian aid for the Afghan resistance, and established an “Islamic legion” made up of Arab volunteers, who were received by the Pakistani intelligence service, the ISI and Jamaat-i-Islami in Peshawar before sending them to join the mujahidin groups.159 As aptly described by Oliver Roy, Taliban rise to power in Afghanistan was the culmination of a “joint venture between the Saudis, the Muslim Brotherhood and the Jamaat-e-Islami put together by the ISI”.160

The Taliban experiment in Afghanistan encouraged its Pakistani counterparts to articulate their demand more forcefully for strict Islamic order in the country, while the religious parties openly provided the support structures to continue Jihad, thus forging close ties between the Taliban regime and Pakistan’s Sunni fundamentalists.161 The West in general and the U. S. in particular woke up to the Taliban menace when groups associated with Al Qaeda issued a manifesto under the tutelage of ‘the International Islamic Front for jihad against Jews and Crusaders’.162 The manifesto read “for more than seven years the US has been occupying the lands of Islam in the holiest of places, the Arabian peninsular, plundering its riches, dictating to its rulers, humiliating its people, terrorizing its neighbours, and turning its bases in the peninsular into a spearhead through which to fight the neighbouring Muslim people.” The manifesto appealed to all practicing Muslims to “confront, fight and kill” Americans and Britons.163 It was in fact when

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158 Taliban’s sweep over Afghanistan deeply unsettled its neighbours. The Massacre of Hazaras and killing of 11 Iranian diplomats infuriated Iran. Similarly the Foreign Ministers of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Russian officials met in Tashkent on August 25th, 1998 to jointly work against Taliban’s advance.

159 The establishment in Pakistan had given strict instructions to all its embassies abroad to give visas to anyone who is eager to come and fight along with the Mujahideens. See, Rashid, Taliban, n. 54, p. 130.


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Osama Bin Laden executed his threats as seen in the bombings of US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in August 1998; the Americans began demonizing Bin Laden.\(^{164}\)

The US cruise missile attacks on Afghanistan on August 21, 1998 destroyed not only bin-Laden’s hideouts around Khost and Jalalabad, but also the Al Badr and Harkatul Ansar camps. The US military actions against Afghanistan and Sudan triggered off a wave of pro Osama and anti US sentiments all over Pakistan. In any case, the US bombing campaign brought to the fore the existence of Kashmiri guerilla camps on Afghanistan soil to train volunteers for *jihadi* activities against India contrary to the constant Pakistani denial regarding its direct role in uprisings in the Kashmir valley. Indeed, Pakistani jehadi recruits for Kashmir accounted for majority of those who died in the US cruise attacks. The air strikes did nothing to dampen the spirit of the radical Muslim groups.\(^{165}\) Refusing to be cowed down by the use of force, the Harkat commander said, “Our Operations have not been disrupted by the air-strikes. Thousands of Mujahideen have already been trained and our cadre is intact. The killing of 22 persons cannot affect our task.”\(^{166}\)

The US military action, however, threatened the wobbly civilian government of Nawaz Sharif. The domestic pressures from the religious right began to cloud the government’s ability to govern. Parties like the *Jamaat-ulema-i-Islam* (Fazlur) and *Sipah-e-Sahaba* got a perfect pretext to mobilise public support against Sharif and vigorously campaigned for the imposition of Shariah and replacing the parliamentary democracy by a Taliban type theocracy. In an overt attempt to placate the conservative elements and cover up its political and economic failure, it decided to revive the legacy of late General Zia ul Haq.\(^{167}\) Worse still, the Kargil misadventure of the Pakistani army in May 1999

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\(^{164}\) The internal state department in August 1996 described Osama as “one of the most significant financial sponsors of extremist Islamic activities in the world today.” He was not described as a terrorist at all. Washington was supportive of the Taliban between 1994 and 1996 because it viewed the later anti Iran, anti-Shia and pro-west. See *Washington Post*, October 3, 2001

\(^{165}\) The message of Al Qaeda leader Ayman al Zawahiri read, “Tell the Americans, we aren’t afraid of bombardments ... The war has only just began. The Americans should now await the answer.” Jonathan Randal, *Osama* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2006), p. 144.


\(^{167}\) Rahimullah Yusufzai, “Myth and Man”, *Newsline* (Karachi) Vol. 10, No. 3 (September 1998), p. 34.
cost Nawaz Sharif dearly in terms of international isolation as well as the erosion of his popularity at home.

The Kargil Episode

Under the guise of Kashmiri “freedom fighters”, the Pakistani army occupied the Kargil heights in the far north of Indian side of Kashmir just across the LOC, thus posing a threat to Indian supply routes. Although border tensions and exchange of fire across the Line of Control was not new between the two countries, the Kargil adventure in 1999 by the Pakistani army was different in terms of strategic planning and tactical moves.\(^\text{168}\)

The Indian side was taken by surprise when military personnel from the Pakistani Northern Light Infantry Regiment intruded into vacated Indian Military posts in Kargil and occupied the snowy peaks. They struck at a time when political situation in India was in a state of suspended animation and when Indian surveillance in the region was slack.\(^\text{169}\)

The intruders commanded the great advantage of height and there were numerous reports of how the well-entrenched intruders directed artillery fire on the Srinagar-Leh highway, seriously affecting movement of army convoys carrying arms and ammunitions and supplies. The military game plan of the intruders was to paralyse the supply lines which are of incalculable significance since they function as reinforcement routes for the large contingent of Indian armed forces present in the area.\(^\text{170}\)

Severance of these routes would trap the Indian soldiers on the Siachen Glacier and the eventual evacuation of Indian forces from Siachen would partially avenge the Pakistani loss in 1971.\(^\text{171}\) Finally as the Pakistanis took up positions in the Kargil heights,

\(^{168}\) Kargil extends 168 Kms along the LOC from Kaobal Gali to Chorbat La. The topography is characterised by high mountains and extremely cold and glaciated weather conditions. Lack of tracks and harsh weather dictated the Indian policy of abandoning their bunkers in winter and re-occupying it in summer and spring. The Pakistanis took advantage of the Indian absence by making intrusions in the area.

\(^{169}\) During the Kargil intrusions, India was in political turmoil because the National Democratic Alliance–led government of Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee had lost the no confidence motion in the Parliament.


\(^{171}\) Pakistan army was still unable to recover pre-emptive capture of Siachen in 1984, since then it is a point of contention. The Indian army spent Rs.3.5 core a day to retain its hold-over Siachen. By recapturing
they must have calculated the benefits accruing from the internationalization of Kashmir issue. If they succeeded in Kargil with minimum casualties and least cost the Pakistani side intended to extract optimum mileage from India for the post conflict negotiated settlements. By calling the intruders Kashmiri Mujahideen, they thought they had a perfect camouflage for their shocking moves. The masterminds of the Kargil operation were driven by the belief that their nuclear capability demonstrated a year before would provide a protective shield to Pakistan. Their nuclear status would put pressure on the international community to expedite efforts at settling the Kashmir imbroglio. Secondly, they assumed that the world leaders would refrain from being judgmental and buy the Pakistani position on Kargil. Little did they know that Kargil episode boomranged and severely dented its diplomatic standing world wide.172

As the Indian army mounted combat operations and recaptured vital peaks and government of Pakistan was cold shouldered by allies like the US, the civilian Prime Minister started looking for an honourable way-out. The political and economic cost of the war also weighed heavily on him. Politically, he would be thoroughly discredited in the eyes of the Islamists and his people who link Kashmir to a religious issue, and thus rightfully theirs. A ‘sell out’ on Kargil would encourage fundamentalist and militant outfits to raise the banner of revolt against him and the assumptions did not go wrong either. In the economic front, Pakistan was made to realise that default on external payments would lead to suspension of loans and financial grants, triggering off an unmanageable inflation. Sharif was told that prolonging the Kargil conflict had the potential to render the country’s foreign exchange reserves completely dry in a period of three months.173 All in all, the Kargil episode reveals the inextricable link between the state particularly the military establishment and the jihadi groups on the one hand and the issue of Kashmir on the other. The Kargil in reality was the culmination of a process that

Kargil the glacier can be successfully used as a trade off. See, V.N. Rhagavan, Siachen Conflict without end (New Delhi: Viking, 2002).

172 The former Prime Minister of Pakistan, Benazir Bhutto expressed the collective views of her people in an article. Pakistan’s denials of involvement except for moral support to the Mujahideen, she wrote, were exposed by the Indian Government which outflanked the Pakistani leadership at all levels. Benazir Bhutto, “Kargil was Pakistan’s Biggest Blunder”, Asian Age, August 5, 1999.

had started under Zia, which was further accelerated with the successful jehadi efforts to hijack the Kashmir movement in the early 1990s. In other words, Kargil was the consequence of the growing state-sponsored Islamisation of Pakistani society and relative institutional weight of the military in determining Pakistan’s policy towards India.

**Military Coup**

The bloodless coup of November 3, 1999 by General Musharraf not only brought an end to the civilian rule in Pakistan, but also revealed the country’s democratic fragile foundations. The Army Chief proceeded in the beaten track by suspending the country’s constitution and assumed emergency powers. Without discussing in great details the chronology of events that led to the military take-over of power, it would suffice to hold that the absence of consensus among civilian actors as regards the rules of the game and respect for political institutions rendered them vulnerable to the military intervention. Popularly known as the guarantor of the national security and identity, Pakistani army only needs a pretext to step in to politics and Musharraf was no exception. With the military holding reins of power and the civilian leaders thoroughly discredited, Pakistan once again emerged as a typical praetorian state under General Musharraf. Consequently, democracy was not the only casualty, but more importantly, such dispensation reinforced the military-mullah nexus in the Pakistani society. Indicative of this was the article written by the *Harkat ul-Mujaheddin* chief Maulana Masood Azhar, which read:

> The government in Pakistan has changed. The tyrannical rule of Nawaz Sharif has reached its natural conclusion. We congratulate our fellow countrymen. The honourable armed forces of Pakistan have taken a necessary step at an extremely critical time and saved the country from a grave disaster and frightening turmoil, thus discharging their duty. We pay glowing tributes to them.

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174 Musharraf was given the marching order while he was on a tour to Sri Lanka. Nawaz Sharif had instructed the aviation authorities to divert his plane else where and not land him at Karachi airport. Musharraf managed to land at Karachi and became the final arbiter of his country’s destiny. Sharif was placed in house arrest and Pakistan’s television and telephone networks were brought completely under army control.

Identifying the politicians and political parties as enemies of Pakistan, the article puts forth the argument that Pakistan army and the clergy are the defenders of Islam and the true guardians of the country. It was the same Masood Azhar whose unconditional release from an Indian jail topped the list of demands of five hijackers of Indian Airlines flight IC 814. The five hijackers, all suspected to be Pakistanis, held the Indian air craft hostage for eight days with 155 passengers on board in the Afghan city of Kandahar. An event like this could not have taken place without the Pakistani establishment’s role in it. Thus the point which needs to be highlighted is the unholy nexus between the Islamists, terrorist groups and the military establishment. The Islamist reliance on the army owes much to its monopoly over resources, possession of hard power and more importantly its identification with the state. Besides, its image as the defender of an Islamic Pakistan against a Hindu India makes the religious right the military’s natural ally. “To reward that ally, the military has co-opted the religious sector along with its causes. Pakistan’s political, constitutional and legal development has hinged on how and how much its military led establishment has integrated and rewarded various segments of the clergy in the name of Islamisation. Though the religious parties have never formed a national government, the Islamisation of laws and education is already advanced”.

Rise of Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA)

Musharraf’s regime did precious little to upset the dynamic relationship between the military and Islamist forces. The army general’s aversion to and deliberate persecution of mainstream political parties created space for the religion-based political outfits, notably the newly formed Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA), to grow in strength. The MMA emerged from the Pak-Afghan Defence Council established in October 2001 to oppose US military intervention in Afghanistan and Pakistan’s official partnership in the American led war against terror. Consisted of as many as 26 religious parties and groups, the Council became irrelevant with the fall of Taliban in Afghanistan. Afterwards only six of them signed up together to pool in their ideological resources to contest

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elections as coalition partners. They include the Jamaat-i-Islam (JI) Jamiat Ulema-e-Pakistan (JUP) Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI-S) led by Samiul Haq, Jamiat ulema-e-Islam led by Fazlur Rehman (JUI-F) Islami Tehrik Pakistan (ITP) and Jamiat Ahl-e-Hadith (JAH).

The MMA was thus a heterogeneous mix of parties belonging to different sects with varied networks in Islam but sharing common interests. In the creation of the united front of the Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal, the military played an instrumental role. It propped up this grand coalition through state patronage to act as a counterweight to the mainstream political parties. Apart from the MMA, Pakistan Muslim League – Qaeda Azam was the only political party visible in the military dominated political landscape and that too because it enjoyed the blessings of the army. Other religious parties, notably the Jamaat-e-Islam were co-opted by the military in pursuit of common interests, but which they described as their commitment to “legitimate” causes. The Jamaat was, for instance, the face of Afghan jihad in Pakistan since the time of Zia ul Haq and its affiliated extremist outfits, Al-Badar, Hizbul-Mujahideen, Jaish-e-Mohammad and Lashkar-e-Taiba carried out the jihadi struggle in Kashmir.

Although religious parties have never formed a national government on their own, they have in varying degrees complemented the military both in its quest of legitimacy and its efforts at marginalising the mainstream parties politically. In post-Zia period, for example, the left-of-the centre PPP government in 1988 was constantly challenged by the Islamic Democratic Front of which the Jamaat was a key constituent. Similarly, the disclosure in the National Assembly about the disbursement of funds worth Rs. 140

178 Ibid., p. 5.

179 The two factions of JUI belong to the 19th century Sunni Deobandi School and the JUP belong to the more inclusive Barevis School. The Orthodox Deobandis remain dismissive about the role of saints while the relatively modern Barevis look at saints as intermediaries to communicate with the Prophet and seek divine guidance and Salvation. The Jamiat-e-Ahle Haith are influenced by the Wahhabi sect and consider themselves “the people of the Prophet’s tradition.” The Islamic Tehrik Pakistan (ITP) represents the Shias who are considered non-Muslims by the Deobandis and Wahhabis. See, Jamal Malik, Colonialization of Islam: Dissolution of Traditional Institutions in Pakistan (Lahore, 1996), pp. 4-7.

180 Both the military hawks and religious fundamentalist threaten civilian leaders with dire consequences should they make any place moves with India. Any deal with India had the potential of provoking an emotional response. See “The Prevention of Terrorism Act, 2002”, The Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India at http://mha.nic.in/poto-o2.htm#schedule.
million during the 1990 general elections by General Aslam Beg reveal that the electoral victory for the IJI was manipulated. After having helped the IJI win the elections, certain sections of the army extended covert support to the Jamaat’s efforts to instigate public unrest against Sharif in 1993, which ultimately led to the fall of his government.

The post-Sharif period was also marked by the growing saliency of religious parties largely because of they were seen by the military as natural ally vis-à-vis their common enemy, the secular, albeit relatively, national parties. Internally, General Musharraf used their services to consolidate his position and at the same time neutralise the potent civilian opponents. Externally, he allowed them to pursue their policy of global jihad so as to convince the West, particularly the US that the specter of Islamist terrorism could only be contained by a military ruler. As a result, the U.S. provided the bulk of $10 billion in aid to the military in the aftermath of the September 11 terror attacks believing that the military could become their reliable partner and only institution with the capacity to govern and to combat militants.”

In an interview to International Crisis Group, Benazir Bhutto’s spokesman Farhatullah Babar compared the MMA’s formation and rigging in elections to “targeted selective killing” by the military to ensure a hung Parliament with the supremacy of the pro-military religious coalition like the MMA. According to the PPP spokesman, the victory of MMA in certain areas “is to brandish to the west the threat of Islamic extremism and show the United States that the only alternative to the military is the rule of Mullahs”.

The MMA in fact owed its electoral victory in North West Frontier Province and Balochistan (where it is a coalition partner with Pakistan Muslim League (Qaid-a-Azam)) to the attempts taken by General Musharraf to restrict the political space for the PPP and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), country’s two leading national parties. While scores of mainstream politicians like Benazir and Sharif were forced to live in exile and many were denied permission to hold public meetings, the MMA marched ahead without any kind of restrictions imposed on them. Musharraf passed stringent laws like the

conduct of General Elections order 2002 which contained clauses requiring the prospective candidate for elective office to hold a Bachelor’s degree certificate thus disqualifying hundreds of party worker from seeking election. Corollary to this, the Election Commission decided to give official recognition to madrassa certificate holders as equivalent to government degree certificates and thus could contest in polls. According to the Directory of Deeni Madaris, Ministry of Education, Islamabad, 2003, there were 10,430 madrasas in Pakistan. The unofficial figure, however, remains high and a significant number remains un-registered. It is believed that as many as 1.7 million students attend classes in madrasas. Musharraf’s moves to give official recognition to madrassa pass-outs was clearly aimed at placating the clergy, and imbalanced the representative character of democracy in Pakistan.

The administration under Musharraf brought false charges against PPP and PML-N leaders, but criminal cases were withdrawn against religious leaders. One such was Sipah-i-Sahaba’s leader Azam Tariq who was allowed to contest a National Assembly seat from prison, even when he faced sectarian murder charges. Just as the MMA, the Pakistan Muslim League (Quaid-i-Azam, PML-Q) reaped the benefits of the military’s antagonism towards the two mainstream parties. The military, MMA and PML-Q nexus was successful in keeping moderate political forces in the NWFP and Baluchistan at bay. President Musharraf issued 127 presidential ordinances and a series of executive orders in the run-up to the 2002 elections in a bid to revive the falling fortunes of the Pakistan Muslim League (Qaid e-Azam). For example, to ensure the PML-Q victory “the constitutional limitations on floor crossing was held in abeyance, after the constitution was partially revived in November 2002 to allow defections of 10 PPP members of the

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184 The European Union election observation mission to Pakistan was highly critical of the arbitrary criteria to have a B.A. degree, which prevented 96% of citizens and 41% of existing legislators of the right to get elected. See, www.europarl.eu.int


186 Ibid., p. 2.


National Assembly to the PML-Q led coalition. Six of the ten secured major portfolios in Prime Minister Zafarullah Khan Jamali’s cabinet." 189

In return for the state patronage, the religious parties acted as conduit for obtaining popular support for Musharraf’s Legal Framework Order (LFO) 2002 designed to legitimise his coup and the military rule in Pakistan without being questioned in any court of law, or forum on any ground. Besides, the LFO also aimed at strengthening and institutionalising the dominant position of the military while entrusting the indirectly elected President with massive powers. 190 Having secured his position, Musharraf rigged and manipulated the local election results of 2005. The elections were conducted on a no-party basis the reason was again to enable the military backed party to organize itself at the grass root level. In an interview to Crisis group the PML-Q leader admitted “we can be safe for two years. We are in no position to fight elections on a party basis.” 191

Thus, military’s manipulation not only weakened the existing sources of opposition but created a civilian face of authoritarianism government which basically carried the military agenda.

The status of PML-Q after the sham elections was elevated to being the single largest party. It enjoyed power at the Centre as well as in three out of four provinces, while the MMA remained firmly saddled in NWFP and worked as a junior partner in Balochistan. Likewise, the active presence of Muttahida Majlise-Amal (MMA) not only acted as a counterweight to the established political parties in Pakistan, it also brought religion to be a part of legislation and public policy. Apart from striving to make Pakistan a true Islamic welfare state through introduction of Sharia and Islamisation of legal system, the MMA was squarely opposed to the American interference in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and its aggression against Iraq. 192 Doubtless, in the growth of the MMA, the

192 The anti-Americanism of MMA was only a rallying cry for all Islamists. On the surface MMA’s political manifesto ranged from non-religious issues like protection of basic Human rights, to work for a literate society etc but a closer look at its actions in NWFP reveals their Islamic hidden agenda. The Provincial government’s actions like banning Music video’s featuring women, banning medical examination of women by male doctors, banning male coaches for women, and male journalist covering
military played an instrumental role. Its support base was, however, equally strong with the madaris providing the cadre network for it organisation and mobilisation. It is estimated from a survey that there are 6,000 madaris in Pakistan, out of which 2,333 belong to the Deobandi School, 1,625 to Barelis, 224 to Ahle Hadiths, 163 to Shias, 815 to JUI-F and 58 to JUI-S 120 to JUP, 67 to the Sipah-e-Sabaha, 119 to Tehrik-e-Jafaria and 2,969 miscellaneous. These “Madaris have filled a need created by rising unemployment and the collapse of state education. There is no entry tests, no fees and room and board is free. For an unemployed, indigent teenager willing to undergo the rigmarole, enrolment in a Madaris provides an ascriptive dignity, prospect of employment in new mosques and in the burgeoning mehfil industry in addition to spiritual rewards and salvation.”

In sum, Pakistan under Musharraf saw the Islamist forces occupying the political centre-stage, thanks to his policy of discrimination against and harassment of the mainstream parties and their leaders. By trying to neutralise the countervailing civilian forces, Musharraf, consciously or unconsciously, created just enough space for the Islamists to assert their primacy in national politics. In the absence of ideological alternatives, the well funded radical groups have, for instance, exploited the situation to their advantage. Similarly, the MMA-led government in NWFP initiated conservative measures like Sharia law in the province. It constituted a 14 member Nifaz-e-Shariat Council (NSC) to help the government in the implementation of Islamic laws and recommendations of the Council of Islamic ideology in government departments. Taking up the role of moral police, a ministry for promoting virtue and preventing vices was also set up. The MMA legislators belong to the pro Taliban JUI-F, the dominant party in

Female sport speaks volumes of their priorities once in power. See 15 point manifesto at http://mma.org.pk/theparty/manifesto.


MMA. The JUI-F was given lot of space by the military establishment to propagate its Deobandi Islam with the help of traditional Pashtun leadership.\textsuperscript{196}

The MMA was initially opposed to allocate seats for women in parliament but political compulsions led to a change in approach and the new policy line was that the number of seats for women should be reasonable. The MMA advocated the segregation of sexes in educational institutions and justifying segregation in the name of Islam the MMA Minister for Women Development said, “we want women to have the status given to them by Islam as mothers, wives and sisters” but “we will not force them to follow the Islamic code of behaviour. We will not use force but persuasion and education.”\textsuperscript{197} The MMA’s \textit{modus operandi} was to create conditions for the implementation of all recommendations made by the Council of Islamic Ideology (CII). The recommendations though upheld by the Federal Shariat Court, successive governments have not approved or implemented them.\textsuperscript{198} A closer scrutiny of the following CII recommendations underscores the Islamist agenda of the Pakistani establishment:

1. Mandatory observance and strict enforcement of veil for women;
2. Veil observing Women seeking employment should not be forced to submit photographs;
3. Pakistani women officials should not be allowed entry in female hospitals, especially gynecology wards;
4. Women should not go to male doctors nor have their clothing stitched by male tailors;
5. Family planning measures should be abandoned because it is un-Islamic;
6. The government should give priority to developing localities where people pray five times a day;
7. Regular prayers should be mandatory for appointment and promotion;
8. Police should be taught Quran and its verses should be displayed in offices;
9. A person’s dress, house and office should reflect simplicity;

\textsuperscript{196} Three factors are attributed by religious scholars to the Deobandi influence among Pashtuns (1) Historic linkages between Deoband and Kabul through numerous visits by ulemas and Preachers; (2) The ultra conservative social structures among Pashtuns; and (3) Lack of Hindu cultural influence like caste etc on Pashtuns. See, J. Malik, pp. 177-178.

\textsuperscript{197} “The Mullahs and Military”, n. 59, p. 21.

10. A religious scholar should be appointed in every Pakistani mission to propagate Islam;

11. Music in public transport should be disallowed and un-Islamic postures and banners should be removed. (MMA has already enforced it.;

12. Festivities on Basant (spring festival) should be banned;

13. Arabic should be compulsory in Schools;

14. The upper age of juvenile justice system should be fixed not by age but by puberty. 199

Committed to strengthen Pakistan’s Islamic roots, the MMA pressed for the inclusion of more ulemas in the Federal Shariat Court so as to ensure the strict implementation of the CII directives. Although Musharraf never succumbed to the MMA pressures, he made no attempts to undermine the political saliency of the orthodox religious parties either. Wary of international aversion towards the Talibanisation and being pragmatic enough to understand the importance of holding on to power, the MMA at one stage tried to scale down its Islamic rhetoric. In December 2002, it, for instance, organised a convention for women to dispel fears of imposition of Taliban style Islamic code. 200

**Madrassas**

The preceding discussion reveals the extent to which Musharraf’s military dispensation relied on religion both as a source of legitimacy and a strategy of neutralising his potent mainstream political opponents. It was this dependence for regime survival that constrained the state to act decisively against the religious institutions such as madrassas or Islamic seminaries, which had become the “Schools of hate” and the chief source of Islamic extremism in the 1990s.

Located all over Pakistan they provide free food, housing and clothing and in poorer parts of Southern Punjab sectarian party like the Sipah-e-Sahaba even pay parents as a motivating tool to send their children to madrasas. 201 Madrassas are generally established with a philanthropic motive to spread Islamic values, and education. In a

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200 In the convention Qazi Hussain Ahmed said that the party would give equal opportunities to women, repeal bad laws and abolish honour killings etc. See, “Freedom of voice” available at http://www.dawn.com/2002/10/22ed.html

201 Stern, “Pakistan’s Jihadi culture”, n. 69, pp. 118-119.
country where 40 percent of people are literate, access to schools difficult, madrasas have reached out to fulfill the need for literacy. Mainstream education in Pakistan does not have a wider reach and a 1997 survey informed that only 57 percent of the citizens of school-going age were registered, 90 percent of whom were in state-owned schools where 20 percent of the teachers did not attend and 60 percent of the pupils dropped out before completing primary school. The economic mismanagement and overspending on defense has done maximum damage to the state education system and the radical Islamists have exploited the inadequacies to their advantage. In 1990, India spent around two percent of its GDP every year on its defense requirements, while Pakistan spent five percent of GDP on its military which is less than half of India’s size, and the country is one eights the size of India. These schools of Islam with the passage of time turned potential grounds of jihad since lavishly funded by petro-dollars and bereft of state supervision (sometimes even encouraged by certain regimes like Zia) the madrassas were free to preach their own narrow orthodox and prejudiced version of the religion.

The Islamic seminaries help their students to join the jihadi movement in Kashmir or Afghanistan or even against fellow Muslims differing from their own sect. They are indoctrinated to fulfill their “spiritual obligations” and Pakistani officials estimate such madrassas would constitute some 10 to 15 percent of the total Madrassas. Although Musharraf had promised to combat Islamist extremism and jihadi groups by regulating the networks of madrassas, the ideological supply lines of jihadists, the government’s reform programme yielded precious little as banned groups resurfaced under new banners and madrassas continued to flourish in Central Punjab.

The religious schools in the districts of Gujranwala and Lahore are controlled by the Jamaat-ud Dawa whose ideological orientations have close resemblance to those of the Salafis and Saudi brand of Wahhabi Islam. The madrassas run by Jamaat-ud Dawa

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204 During Zia’s rule, the highest degree from madrassa was made equivalent to a master degree and madrassas were overtly encouraged to craft Pakistan’s religious identity. Pakistan Link, May 2000

205 Ibid., p. 110.
are not affiliated to mainstream madrassa boards and follow distinct curriculum. Courses taught in such madrassas include basics of Jihad and how to wage Jihad against the infidels. Consequently, anti-Hindu and anti-India rhetoric dominate the discourses and play a crucial role in their hatred campaign. President Musharraf sounded pro-active when he stressed on galvanizing the positive aspects and dismissing the drawbacks of these religious institutions. He talked of developing new syllabi for them which would introduce Pakistan studies, Science, Mathematics, English and other secular subjects. He stressed the need to unite madrasas with the mainstream modern education which would help the students to change tracks and compete with the rest and not join the rank of a prayer leader only. He was emphatic to establish the writ of the government so as to enable the state to regulate the smooth functioning of the madrassas.

Following the blueprint to reform madrassas, Musharraf issued another ordinance to constitute the Pakistan Madrassa Education Board (PMEB) in 2001 under the supervision of the Council of Islamic Ideology, whose main function was to make recommendations to Parliament to ensure that Muslims follow principles of Quran and Sunnah. Thus for President Musharraf, challenges were many but not insurmountable. The PMEB did not have the authority to enforce registration. In the absence of registration there was no way to confirm if the standardised curriculum was introduced. Thus, PMEB’s only success was the establishment of three model madrasas with 300 students and the teaching matter was the adjusted version of Dars-e-Nizami the standard madrasa course. The resistance to comply with the government’s move came from all waqfs who forged an alliance as the Ittehad Tanzeematul Madaris-i-Deenya (Alliance of the organizations of Religious schools). Moreover, the threat of stopping governmental aid and Zakat grants was a misnomer since both the kinds of grants have miniscule effect on the total collections of Madrassas. Pakistan has no legal provision to monitor foreign currencies account holders or freeze funds of suspect. In the absence of a definite


blueprint to regulate flow of donations and charities to religious seminaries from abroad, it was high nigh impossible to monitor aid from foreign sources.\textsuperscript{208}

The major problem of madrassa-reform in Pakistan is the absence of definite authorities guiding it. The plans and roadmaps move from Ministry to Ministry, which include interior, foreign affairs, religious affairs and education. "The dispersion of responsibility creates uncertainty on such basic issues as the number of schools, their locations and their needs. The ministries of education and religious affairs both have jurisdiction over registration. Their functions overlap also in curriculum-development and implementation. Neither, however, is qualified to address the issue of militancy. Nor is there any clear demarcation of the role of the intelligence agencies."\textsuperscript{209} Ironically, the military never seriously challenged the freedom and autonomy of these institutions. The International Crisis Group (ICG) in one of its yearly reports has noted, "To initiate radical reforms and bring religious education closer to mainstream education require redefining the military’s internal policies and external preferences. It is unclear whether the Musharraf government is willing to do either."\textsuperscript{210}

To sum up, Musharraf’s madrassa reform-measures had limited success. For example, some such serious measures as integrating the madrassa system with the modern sector of education by redesigning text books and syllabi were not attempted at the first place.\textsuperscript{211} There were indeed doubts raised in many quarters if the military-led government would ever risk confronting the religious lobbies because Islamism had permeated the rank and file in the army as well. The army’s role was no longer confined to merely defending Pakistan’s territorial borders; under Zia it became the defender of the country’s “ideological frontiers”. In selection boards for official candidates, for instance, \\textsuperscript{\textsuperscript{208} Pakistan has not signed the International Convention for the suppression of financing of terrorism. It has no specific mechanism to check funds through official and unofficial channels. Some Arab charitable institutes are closed but nothing is yet done to regulate funding to madrassas. See, http://www.un.org/Docs/sc/committees/1373/submittedreports.html\textsuperscript{209} The Auqaf board, which is entrusted with the duty of maintaining record of Mosques and unregistered madrasas have no record, since this work was vested to the secret agencies. See, “Pakistan: Madrasas, Extremism and the military”, n. 193, p. 27.\textsuperscript{210} Ibid., pp.3-4\textsuperscript{211} For a detailed discussion of curricula and textbooks in Pakistan, see the project, A civil Society Initiative in Curricula and Text Books Reform, (Islamabad: Sustainable Development Policy Institute, 2003)
religious knowledge became a determinant for selection and promotion in the place of secular educational background. Besides, the ruling Generals openly declared themselves to be conservative Islamic in their orientations and even tried to outdo each other in an attempt to be seen at congregational prayers. The civilian leadership after Zia was not powerful enough to question the army’s designs and recruitments. As a result, a growing number of Islamists made their presence felt in the army and the Islamist-military bonding fulfilled the function of political expediency. It was only after September 11 attacks in the USA that madrassas came under intense international observation as terror houses, which prompted Musharraf’s crackdown on terrorists linked to Taliban and Al Qaeda.

Musharraf’s War on Terror

The world-wide outrage against Islamist violence following the September 11, 2001 terrorist attack on the world’s most powerful country pushed Pakistan to re-orient its foreign policy perspectives. Pakistan was left with no options but to join America as an ally in its war against Osama bin Laden’s al-Qaeda network based in Afghanistan. In the determined war against terror there were only friends and foes, Pakistan decided to be America’s friend and promised “unstinted co-operation” to the international coalition against terror.

In a televised address to the nation on September 11, 2001, General Musharraf said,

We have to save our interests. Pakistan comes first, everything else is secondary .... Let me say that I am concerned about Afghanistan and the Taliban - - - I have done everything for Afghanistan and Taliban when the world is against them. I have met twenty to twenty five world leaders and talked to each of them in favour of the Taliban .... I have been repeating this stance before all leaders but I am sorry to say that none of our friends accepted this. In the present situation we have been trying to convince the Taliban to be wise. We have also asked the US for evidence about Osama bin laden. Also how do we

serve Afghanistan's interests? By going against the world community or by working with the international community, I am sure you will agree with me that we can only do the latter.215

By retreating from the old pro-Taliban Afghan policy and participating in the US-led "Operation Enduring Freedom", President Musharraf ran the risk of antagonising the religious lobby and even alienating him from his core constituency. There were indeed reports of internal resistance from within the military towards Pakistan’s new policy of dumping Taliban and al Qaeda.216 After all, it was the sustained patronage from Pakistani establishment (both military and civilian) that was primarily responsible for the phenomenal growth of Taliban from the madrassas of Pakistan to become the world’s most dreaded terrorist force. Thus, the decision to go against the Taliban was not out of conviction, but convenience. The reason, according to some critics, was to ensure the flow of economic and military aid from the United States, which Pakistan requires to compete with India. “The military, which has dominated the Pakistani state since the mid-1950’s, has embraced a tripartite policy that emphasises India as the national unifier, rivalry with India as the principal objective of the state’s foreign policy and an alliance with the United States as a means to defray the costs of Pakistan’s massive military expenditure.”217

In spite of vital assistance from Pakistan, the war against terror is far from over. If the recent events in the Pakistan’s tribal zones are any indication, the risk of Islamist terrorism remains a real one even after the ouster of the Taliban regime by the US-led anti-terror coalition in 2001. For these areas of Pakistan, which shelter al Qaeda groups have traditionally been dominated by the ethnic Pashtuns whose strong emotional bonds with their ethnic cousins across the border has led them to harbour deep anti-US feelings. There are now speculations that Al Qaeda elements have entered into alliance with indigenous terrorist groups from Pakistan.


216 To deal with internal dissension, there were major shake-ups within the army. The head of the inter-service intelligence and deputy chief of Army Staff were asked to seek premature retirement while some others were reshuffled.

At any rate, the upsurge of Islamists in Pakistan's western province is in part the result of patronage politics of the military regime and in greater part, the absence of democratic outlets and suppression of moderate leadership. The October 2002 Parliamentary election is by far the strongest showing polls for the Islamists in Pakistan who managed to get 11 percent of popular votes and 20 per cent of the seats in the lower house. Sufficiently emboldened by the unprecedented electoral success, they have been striving for the Taliban style Islamisation in the North West Frontier Province bordering Afghanistan. Furthermore, the infusion of external funds and military hardware from the U.S. in the 1980s to fight the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan created conditions conducive to a steady radicalisation of the areas generally outside the effective control of the central authorities of Pakistan. When Pakistan was chosen to be a frontline state against the expansion of communism, jihadi forces were unleashed which eventually formed the al-Qaeda.

Apart from providing military help and logistics to train hard-line Islamic groups, the U.S. was also actively involved in the Islamists project by distributing jihadi propaganda literature and identifying ideologically dedicated Muslims to fight in Afghanistan. For example, thirteen million odd books designed and written at the University of Nebraska Omaha were distributed in the 1980s at the refugee camps and Pakistani Madrassas. After the 9/11 attacks, United States attempted to remove the objectionable passages and provocative imagery from the textbooks and the reintroduced the revised ones after the schools reopened as a part of its post-conflict reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan. In Pakistan, however, the Islamist organisations continued to publish thousand of copies of jehadi material notwithstanding the American pressures on the government to carry out the necessary reforms. A cursory glance at the website of Markaz al Dawa reveals that it has a circulation of 400,000 copies of jehadi write-up.

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218 Democratic governance is antithetical to jihadis as well as the military regime. A civilian head of state would definitely wish to keep the army leadership out of the national decision making process. In the case of Pakistan the entrenched army calls the limits and it is in the interests of both the parties to keep civilian leadership at bay.

219 Haqqani, Between Mosque and Military, n. 18, p. 2.


221 Ibid.
Likewise, *Lashkar-e-Tayaba*, which traces its origin to the parent body *Markaz al Dawa al Irshad*, has five major publications popular as voice of Islam (English), *Al Ribat* (Arabic), *Majallah al Dawa* (Urdu), *Tayyibat* (Urdu), *Zarb-e-Taiba* (Urdu for the youth) *Jihad Times* (bilingual weekly). It has also a website radio known as *al-jihad* in Urdu and Arabic.²²²

Similar publication efforts have been made by other Islamist groups, notably the *al-Rasheed* trust, which is a charitable organisation but its publications inspire thousands to follow the militant path. Organisations like the *Markaz al Dawa al Irshad* (MDI) command massive financial resources at their disposal with a highly impressive headquarters near Lahore. It is a self-sustaining unit with two hundred acres of land, which contains garment and furniture factories, an iron foundry, sports complex, markets and residential quarters for students and trainees. JUD’s expanding infrastructure is evident form its 2200 offices across Pakistan. It also runs 150 schools known as Dawa Schools, 11 seminaries 2 science colleges, an ambulance service mobile clinics blood banks and a charity organisation called *Idara Khidmat-e-khalq*, which was involved in the distribution of relief in the post-earthquake period in October 2005.²²³

Central theme of most of their publications is that “jihad will continue until Islam becomes the dominant religion”, which in a way reflects their pan-regional dream.²²⁴ To translate this dream, these religious and so-called charitable organisations act not just as the indoctrination centers, but also provide hard military training to the cadres of *Lashkar-e-Taiba* involved in a major way in Kashmir. Through their publications, they try to stir sympathy for the Kashmiri Muslims allegedly subjected to persecution by the Indian state and attract young recruits by promising paradise after death.²²⁵

²²² The MDI is an offshoot of *Ahle Hadith Organisation*. It is based in Muridke, Punjab; its publications include militant literature and it endorses the *Salafi/Wahabi* point of view. The MDI in Pakistan is an economically well-off body and believes in using latest technical knowledge in the study of Islam to develop a lethal variety of jihad. For further details, see www.markazdawa.org


²²⁴ See, Abbas, *Pakistan’s Drift*, n. 5, p. 213. According to Abbas, the financial strength of Ahle Hadiths was responsible for attracting unprivileged youths since families of boys who fight and lose their lives are amply rewarded monetarily and brain washed of a better life after death.

²²⁵
The Markaz Dawat ul Irshad’s chief, Hafiz Mohammad Saeed’s advised President Musharraf to reorient Pakistan’s foreign policy to strengthen the fraternal ties with the Islamic world and to shun the pro-American tilt by reducing its dependence on the USA.\textsuperscript{226} Whether this advice was followed was a different matter, but it showed the virtual strength in terms of resources as well as leadership of the jihadi groups in Pakistan. Lashkar-e-Taiba organises a gathering of half a million people annually which is next only to the Tablighi Jamaat’s assembly.\textsuperscript{227} The selective approach of the Pakistani establishment was evident when leaders of extremist organisations like Maulana Azhar Masood of Jaish-e-Muhammad and Hafiz Muhammad Saeed of Laskar-e-Tayyaba were temporally detained under the maintenance of public order law and not under the stringent Anti-Terrorist Act. Both of them later changed the nomenclature of their organisations to escape the ban and Western pressures, thus keeping their agenda, ideology and goals intact. Masood changed Jaish-e-Muhammad to Khudam-ul-Islam, while Hafiz renamed LeT as Jammat ud Dawa (JD).

What distinguishes Hafiz Mohammad Saeed from the rest is his close proximity to ISI, the Pakistani army and even Osama bin Laden.\textsuperscript{228} The unprecedented growth and its corresponding political weight owe largely to the missionary zeal of this man, who nurtures the grand dream of establishing Islam in the whole of South Asia. In a manifesto under the title \textit{Hum Jehad Kyon Karte Hain} (Why do we do Jihad?), Saeed has laid down the following eight-point agenda in pursuit of his ambitious project:

1. to eliminate evil and facilitate conversion and practice of Islam;
2. to ensure the ascendency of Islam;
3. to force non-Muslims to pay poll tax (Jazya paid by non-Muslims for protection from a Muslim ruler);
4. to assist the weak and powerless;

\textsuperscript{226} Ibid, p. 215. The author quotes the jihadi leader’s speech delivered from one of its annual gathering in November 1999.

\textsuperscript{227} Tablighis have a strong presence in Pakistan. The Tablighi Jamaat was instrumental in founding Harkat-ul-Mujahideen.

\textsuperscript{228} Wilson John, “Resurgent Radicalism in Pakistan: A Case Study of Jamaat-ul-Dawa”, paper presented at the Foundation Day Seminar, Observer Research Foundation (ORF), New Delhi, September 5, 2008.
5. to avenge the blood of Muslims killed by non-believers;
6. to defend a Muslim State;
7. to liberate Muslim territories under non-Muslim occupation.229

The call for Jihad has trans-national appeal which is evident from the flow of generous funds and material help to sustain the organisation from Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Britain and many anonymous donors.230 Within Pakistan, the Let/JUD recruits young energetic boys through its jihadi publications and posters. Despite Pakistan’s commitment to international community to fight terrorism within the country and without, the Let and Jaish-e-Mohammad recruited more than 3, 350 and 2, 235 boys respectively in the year 2003.231 The duty of every recruit was to convince their family of the utility of their jihadi mission and this explains why thousands of people attend the funeral when a boy becomes a ‘martyr’. The social status of the family is elevated and many of them become overnight celebrities.232

The rigorous indoctrination of young minds was carried out with a profound theological reasoning that Jihad is the revolutionary path of Islam that not merely rejects the traditional notions of passivity, but also justifies the use of force to combat the Muslim backslider. “jihad”, declares an issue of its publications, Nanhe Mujahid, “is unique tourism. In other types of tourism one spends money. But in jihad, one earns a lot of money, female slaves and concubines in paradise. When a Muslim conquers the land of infidels, he becomes owner of their property. He becomes owner of their women.”233 Similarly, Kashmir is depicted as an integral part of Pakistan occupied forcibly by Hindus. The writings exhort small children to grow up to be true defenders of Muslims. Some of the primary school textbooks has strong message for the Mujahids to remove infidelity from the planet. Last but not the least, a hallowed picture of the martyr’s

229 Ibid, p. 4.
232 Stern, “Pakistan's Jihad Culture”, n. 69, pp. 116-118.
233 John, “Resurgent Radicalism”, n. 236, p. 9
mission in Kashmir has been drawn so as to create mythological awe in the minds of the future Mujahids when they fight in Kashmir.\textsuperscript{234}

The virtual immunity Hafeez Saeed and others enjoyed from the state laws reflected their clout in the Pakistani establishment, particularly in the military circles. The recent controversy surrounding the linkage between Pakistan’s nuclear establishment and the LeT is a pointer to the enduring nexus between the state players and the so-called “non-state actors.”\textsuperscript{235} Indeed, there exists enough proof to hold that the Pakistani establishment has been selective in its treatment of extremists. While those resistant to the military regime or involved in sectarianism have been dealt with sternly, it continues to support, encourage or deliberately ignore (for reasons best suited to its interests) activities of a wide range of Islamist organisations, particularly those engaged in carrying out terror strikes inside India.\textsuperscript{236} In the year 2000 there were about 18 militant organisations engaged whole-heartedly to jihad in the Kashmir valley. While critics termed this as Musharraf’s “double speak on his war against terror”, he subtly justified his policy of selective targets by making a distinction between Kashmiri freedom fighters and other Islamists.\textsuperscript{237} This is what precisely explains why Musharraf welcomed with open arms the three extremists India freed to end the hijacking of Flight IC-814 and helped one of them to form the Jaish-e-Mohammed. Over the years, Musharraf filled Pakistani jails more with democracy activists than with jihadists. In the process what the military ruler created was “a pressure-cooker society congenial to the growth of extremism.”\textsuperscript{238}

It is true that Musharraf banned some such extremists and sectarian organisations as the Lashkar-e-Tayyaba, Jaish-i-Mohammad, Sipah-e-Shaba, Tehrik-i-Jafaria and

\textsuperscript{234} Ibid. p. 10.
\textsuperscript{235} “Is Pakistan Still a Launch Pad for Terrorism?”, \textit{The Daily Telegraph}, July 18, 2005.
\textsuperscript{236} The much-publicised crackdown on militant groups by Musharraf was counterbalanced by his attempts to avoid upsetting the army’s Kashmir policy. See Ayesha Jalal, \textit{Partisans of Allah} (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 2008), p. 283.
\textsuperscript{237} Haqqani, \textit{Between Mosque and Military}, n. 18, p. 301. Haqqani describes the extremism against India by Pakistanis by an incident where Mujahideens beheaded 3 Indian soldiers and displayed their heads, but the spokesman was only concerned that such news should not be published in any English newspaper as the West would read it.
\textsuperscript{238} Brahma Chellaney, “Military is the Problem”, \textit{Times of India}, January 3, 2008.
Tanzim Nifaz-i-Shariat-i-Mohammadi. But this never deterred these organisations and some of them continued to flourish under new names. As stated earlier, the Lashkar-e-Taiba became Jamat ul-Dawa and Jaish was called Khudam-ul-Islam. Although Lashkar-e-Taiba was banned, its parent body Dawat ul Irshad was not touched. Islamist leaders like Hafiz Saeed and Azhar Masood of Jaish were placed under house arrests without any serious charges. The arrested militants were asked to lie low and released from preventive custody on grounds of insufficient evidence to implicate them against treason. All this pointed to the lack of seriousness and unflinching commitment on the part of President Musharraf to strike out terrorism.

Terror Networks

Groups linked to Pakistan have indulged in grave attacks, one such was the attack on Jammu and Kashmir state legislature and even bolder was the assault on the Indian Parliament on December 13, 2001. The suicide attack on the highest cradle of Indian democracy was a show of defiance against the new international coalition. The crisis created a war like situation with India declaring a state of high alert along its borders with Pakistan. The alarming state of affairs was defused by the intervention of United States. All evidence pointed towards the involvement of Pakistan based terrorist outfits, Lashkar-i-Tayyaba and Jaish-e-Mohammad in the Indian Parliament attack. Save verbal condemnation, Musharraf did precious little to address to the Indian concerns. Nor did he drastically change Pakistan’s Kashmir policy given the broad public support it commands. Moreover, the issue of Kashmir provides the justification for the Pakistani military to play a domineering role in national politics. “Ditching the Taliban was possible and logical under the circumstances, but giving up jihadis who had been groomed and financed to operate in Kashmir was considered a suicidal step for Musharraf and the army. What Musharraf and his advisers in the ISI failed to understand

240 Abbas, Pakistan’s Drift, n. 5, pp. 224-225.
241 Najam Sethi, “Writing on the Wall”, Friday Times (Lahore), May/June 2003, pp. 113-114.
was that extremism inside Pakistan was inherently and inextricably linked with the actions and ideology of jihadi groups operating in Kashmir”. 243

Contrary to Musharraf’s claims, an US annual report on terrorism has revealed that terrorist outfits like the Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) are at large, thanks to its Pakistani patrons. According to an analyst, “as the modern jihadi culture was created, nurtured and groomed in Pakistan, its effect on the many senior people involved in that process, coupled with the massive public support which was state-sponsored should not be underestimated. - - - The jihadi have many supporters in the Pakistan army and secret services. It is extremely unlikely, that none of them would be ‘helping out’ their former friends and allies” 244 The 2007 US annual report on terrorism has brought to the light the material base of the Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) for carrying out its anti-India operations. It has invested massively in commodity markets and real estate, but fearing seizure of assets, the JeM has withdrawn its funds and invested in legal business. 245 The report further notes, “Most of JeM’s cadre and material resources have been drawn from Pakistani militant groups Harkat ul Jihad and Harkat ul Mujahedeen. 246 All this goes to show Musharraf’s attempts at balancing Pakistan’s role as a sponsor of Jihadis and an active partner in the war against terror at the same time.

Predictably, the Pakistan-USA axis against terror developed cracks as the Karzai government in Kabul accused Pakistan of its complicity with the remnants of Taliban regime in unleashing terror in Eastern and Southern part of Afghanistan. 247 Although Musharraf categorically denied such charges, reports emanating from Afghan- Pakistan border region suggested that Islamabad had persisted in its jihadi politics so as to retrieve its strategic leverage in Afghanistan. And this in precise explains why the resurgent Taliban and regrouping of Al Qaeda is directly linked with the Pakistan-based Islamist

243 Abbas, Pakistan’s Drift, n. 5, p. 225.
246 Ibid
organisations. The Haqqani chain of Madrassas affiliated to Jamat ulema-e-Islam (JUI)’s two factions Fazlur Rehman and Samiul Haq have a wide network of jihadi seminars and indoctrination centres which have a large majority of Afghan volunteers ready to fight, kill and destroy in the name of Islam. Under such conditions, the emergence of a new Taliban after few years of hibernation is not a surprising phenomenon. The post-Taliban Afghan government is entrusted with the gigantic task of working towards an inclusive national ideology. Taking its past experiences into account, the purpose would be to safeguard the country from externally supported extremists and neutralise sectarian and religious fundamentalist elements.

But the most serious obstacle to the materialisation of these goals points towards Pakistan. The Karzai government has often accused Pakistan of not doing enough to check cross border infiltration by neo-Taliban and other militants. As pointed out by Ahmed Rashid, “Mr. Karzai says he cannot understand why Musharraf is allowing these extremists who have been living in Pakistan since the defeat of the Taliban, to undermine his government and the Pashtun belt; not can he comprehend why these rogue elements have not been arrested or handed over to the Afghan government.”

In the past, Islamabad had funneled large proportions of American and Arab money for the training of jihadi camps inside Afghanistan and Pakistan’s tribal areas. The military establishment under Musharraf appeared bent on “consolidating colonial-era administrative judicial and political structures that set the region apart from the rest of the country, creating for all practical purposes, a no man’s land, without rule of law and representative institutions.”

Fazlur Rehman, Secretary General of Muttahida Majlis-e Amal (MMA) admitted to Pakistan’s active role in helping the militants to freely access Afghanistan from

250 Sayed Salahuddin and Mike Collettwhite, “French UN Worker in Afghanistan shot Dead”, World Reuters, November 16, 2003
Waziristan. The Manshera area according to him is the base for training jehadi brothers.\textsuperscript{253} The Jamait Ulema-e-Islam is the most important component of the MMA and still enjoys a large support base among Pashtuns in North West Frontier and northern Baluchistan. Together with the party’s political and ideological influence in these areas, the presence of nearly a million Afghan refugees has facilitated the resurgence of the Taliban forces. As the media reports of 2008 suggest, Jalaluddin Haqqani, a well-known Islamic scholar and a Minister in the erstwhile Taliban government in Kabul, has emerged as the leader of the resurgent Taliban. Haqqani. A guerilla leader well adept in firing stinger missiles and an excellent negotiator, Haqqani has earned huge funds for Taliban from the Saudi patrons in the earlier days and he is said to have forged close links with the ISI too.\textsuperscript{254} It is in fact because of his ISI connections that Haqqani has managed to escape to the safe hide outs in Miram Shah in Waziristan in the face of the US-led campaign against Taliban.\textsuperscript{255}

The nexus between Taliban and the Pakistani Islamist organisations has made it “a major source of Islamic extremism and a safe haven for some top terrorist leaders.”\textsuperscript{256} No matter what President Parvez Musarraf pontificated to the world about his commitment to combat terrorism; his willingness to compromise with the Islamists to “bolster his military dictatorship against the domestic forces seeking to reverse his 1999 coup” created condition conducive to the resurrection of the Taliban-Osama brand of radicals in the region.\textsuperscript{257} In fact, Pakistani Military, unlike Turkey and Egypt, has always encouraged Islam, which, in turn, legitimises the activities of the religious lobby in whipping up popular support against ‘Hindu India’, the communists and the decadent West.\textsuperscript{258} Thus the Mullah – military alliance in Pakistan is largely based on the mutuality


\textsuperscript{254} “Haqqani Emerging as New Leader of Resurgent Taliban”, Times of India, July 31, 2008.

\textsuperscript{255} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{256} Office of the Co-coordinator for counter-terrorism, the Department of States, Washington D.C., April 30, 2006.


of interests, which not merely sustains the fundamentalist forces, but contributes in no mean way towards creating the monster of global jihadi terrorism.259

Despite President Musharraf’s public commitment after the 9/11 attacks to root out the extremists, the rogue elements or the so-called “non-state actors” have grown in numbers and strength and almost every major terror attack since September 11 has been traced back to Pakistan.260 In explaining the peculiar state of affairs, some analysts have pointed out that Pakistan under Musharraf had no specific plans to deal with terrorists other than spitting venom against the human rights groups and media activists.261 Some officials were also critical of the US administration for investing too much in Musharraf, and this assessment slowly led to broader contacts with the pro-democracy and civil society elements in Pakistan, while still confirming faith in Musharraf.262 Together with Pakistan’s lawless areas bordering Afghanistan combined with reports of Pakistani intelligence agencies’ connivance with Taliban and Al Qaida forces have turned many in the West skeptical about the prospects of containing the jihadi menace in the long run. In his presentation to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, the U. S. Assistant secretary of Defense, Peter Rodman observed, “There are elements in the Pakistani government who we suspect are sympathetic to the old policy of before 9/11”, adding that there still exists in north western Pakistan a radical Islamic infrastructure that “spews out fighters that go into Kashmir as well as into Afghanistan.”263

President Musharraf’s hesitation in accepting the US–dictated counter-offensive measures had much to with his regime survival strategy, the centerpiece of which was to empower the religious forces in Pakistan to fill up the space left by the secular civilian leadership. Even though never officially denied, the quid pro quo arrangement with the

religious right was evident in the MMA’s charter of demands. His pledge to eliminate extremism faced the obnoxious reality of his desires to obtain MMA’s support for the Legal Framework Order (LFO), which was a constitutional amendment package including Musharraf as the life-time President while institutionalising military dominance in politics.\(^{264}\) The Pakistan Muslim League (Qaid e-Azam) sources indicated that the government had accepted a total of 10 MMA’s demands for Islamisation, which included, among others, legislation in accordance with the recommendations of the Council of Islamic Ideology (CII), funding to 8,000 Madrassas, restructuring economy, education and the broadcasting media along Islamic lines, bringing rights and freedom enjoyed by women in accordance with Islam and ensuring equal treatment to Islamic subjects in educational institutions all over Pakistan.\(^{265}\)

In all, their mutual dependence strengthened pro-Taliban and Al Qaeda forces in Pakistan. The soft attitude of the Musharraf Government towards the religious lobby was evident in the passage of the Sharia Bill and Islamisation programme in the North West through legislative measures.\(^{266}\) The Sharia Bill pledged to impose “Allah’s rule on earth through his pious men” in not yet sanctified by the Parliament.\(^{267}\) In educational institutions like the Khyber Medical College female students were ordered to wear the veil. The MMA in North West imposed restrictions on female athletes having male coaches and banned music, CDs and videos, which it considered un-Islamic. If international press reporting were to be believed there is a strong current of jihad sweeping the small Muslim towns and villages across the North West.\(^{268}\) Pakistani sources also suggest that the militants in Waziristan have established a rudimentary administrative set-up comprising various committees to raise funds, impose taxes and

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264 “Unfulfilled Promises: Pakistan’s Failure to Tackle Extremism”, *ICG Asia Report* No. 73, January 16, 2004, p. 16.
266 The Sharia Bill intends to impose Allah’s rule on earth with the help of his followers and devotees. The Sharia bill not only declares Sharia (Islamic jurisprudence) to be the unchallenged law of the province, it also envisages the government to entrust commissions to find out alternative means of Islamising education, economy and legal system.
carry out Taliban style torture in the name of Islam. Similarly, in Khyber Agency the Laskhar-i-Islami (Army of Islam) headed by JUI-F–linked Deobandi cleric has imposed an Islamic Justice system and airs a rigid hard-line sectarian doctrine.

Strong cross-border links with the Taliban in Afghanistan are no doubt a major factor that accounts for the Talibanisation of Pakistan’s semi-autonomous tribal areas of Malakand, Swat and Batkhela. Apart from ethnic and brotherly ties with the people from across the border, the flourishing inter-regional trade has also benefited the local people. What has, however, given the impetus to the recent upsurge of militancy in these areas of Pakistan is the U.S.-led campaign against Taliban forces and the al-Qaeda chief Osama bin Laden following the September 11 attacks. Bin-Laden may be a dreaded terrorist in the Western eyes, but his image as a holy warrior fighting the powerful forces of the world has earned him popularity among the people of the tribal areas. Nowhere is this more glaring than in the ubiquitous presence of his stickers in this relatively unruly part of Pakistan. Last but not the least, the Islamic conservatism has a popular appeal due to the presence of pro-Taliban parties like the Jamaat-i-Islami, the Sufi Mohammed movement and the Jamaiat-e-ulema-e-Islam. The tribes of the region who have fought with their Afghan cousins against the Russians need no further training in the use of weapons. The pent up emotions of the people only need a call from the influential clerics to join the jihad as part of their religious duty.

Indicative of Talibanisation in North West Frontier Provinces is the emergence of young Talibani leaders like Baitullah Mehsud who is a by-product of the state policy of patronage to the religious right. The best efforts of the ISI and Pakistani religious leaders have failed to convince Mehsud to fight against “infidel troops”. He has instead steadfastly believed in taking the war to Islamabad rather than to Kabul. The grip of

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270 The leading Pakistan–based English daily, Dawn reported that warning had been issued through the FM stations broadcast of dire consequences against those who do not pray five times a day. “Five Illegal FM Stations in Bjaur Closed Down”, Dawn, February 23, 2006.


272 Ibid.

religious fundamentalist in Pakistan’s NWFP has given prominence to a Pakistani cleric named Maulana Fazlullah, who heads the Tehreek –e-Nifaz-e Shariat –e-Muhammad (Movement for Implementing Muhammad’s Shariah) and has successfully defied government attempts to arrest him in 2007 march. The Christian Science Monitor quoted him saying, “Women have been asked to remain behind the four walls of the houses. Men have been given preference by God”. Using a pirated FM radio channel, Fazlullah warned girls from attending schools viewing female emancipation as un-Islamic and violation of purdah.” Similar to the pattern followed in Afghanistan, the Islamist militants have bombed several girls-schools in NWFP where Pakistani forces are supposedly undertaking an operation against the militants. In clear defiance of the state, these neo Talibani elements have launched vigorous attempts to “Islamise” the curriculum in the government-run schools in the area.

**Official Narratives**

The extent to which the Islamist domination of public discourse has contributed to the recent upsurge of religious extremism in Pakistan is either ignored or not adequately explained by the Western analysts and outside observers. As discussed in the preceding chapter, the state-sponsored Islamisation process during Zia ul-Haq’s stint in power created conditions in which a strict puritan interpretation of Islam began to dominate public discourse. In fact, the need for a rethink on Islam as a uniting factor arose after the secession of East Pakistan in 1971. It brought to the fore the unpleasant truth that being Muslim was not sufficient to hold a nation together. As Ziring has noted, “The trauma associated with the 1971 dismemberment is not necessarily visible, but it permeates the attentive public psyche.” Thus, there began a discourse which challenged the existing notions of unity and brotherhood and led to the ascendancy of conservative Islamism. An understanding of public discourse in Pakistan since Zia’s ascension to power requires an analysis of the historical narratives embedded in school history textbooks. After all, it is

these official/state narratives that structure the discourse in post-1971 Pakistan, central to which is the superiority of the Self (Islam).

Paradoxically enough, while Zia’s Islamisation project encouraged and even legitimised the conservative/purist Islamist discourse, it was further reinforced under the two civilian Prime Ministers who used Islam for their survival in power. For example, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif tried to enforce the Sharia Act in a bid to consolidate his religious constituency and the 15th Constitutional Amendment. Like his civilian predecessors, President Musharraf made no attempts to change the official narratives as regards the role of Islam in shaping identity and image of the Pakistani state. When Musharraf revived the Constitution in 2003, there were many amendments but no new measures pertaining to Islamisation. This, however, in no ways marked the end of the efforts to Islamise public policy.277 On the contrary, Musharraf’s tactical cooperation with the religious right constrained the military regime from initiating counter-discourse wherein the bases of national identity and image would not rest on Islam alone. Nowhere was it more glaring than in the government’s failure to introduce curriculum changes in the madrassas in the face of the Islamist protests. Musharraf’s former minister of education, Zubaida Jalal declared herself a “fundamentalist” and denounced as “unacceptable school textbooks that do not include Koranic verses on jihad.”278

It is because of this mindset of the Musharraf regime that the proposed National Education Assessment System (NEAS) of the Ministry of Education to be funded by the World Bank failed to address the problems facing the Pakistani educational system.279 Apart from the short supply of public schools and teachers, the use of flawed curricula and distorted text books, especially for subjects like Pakistan studies and Islamic studies has promoted narrow-mindedness and insensitivity towards religious diversity.280 As the reports of the Sustainable Development Policy Institute reveal, “Students were urged to take the path of jihad (struggle) and Shahadat (martyrdom). War and the military are

278 Hoodbhoy, “Can Pakistan Work?”, n. 228, P.11.
279 “Pakistan: Madrassas, Extremism and the Military”, n. 193, p. 27.
280 Arif Mohammad Khan, “Pak Text Books Foster Hate against India”, Times of India, December 27, 2008.
glorified. The lamentable result is that the public education system teaches students narrow-mindedness, intolerance and even hatred against non-Muslims".281 In the development of such national educational policy, the religious forces have played a crucial role because of their control of the prevailing education system. This is at the same time very much a part of the larger design to validate the official narratives, which explains why the state apparatus far from being averse to this, has been complicit. The military-led state, as argued by an analyst, “has actively promoted material that legitimises continued conflict with India in terms of religious intolerance and historical distortions.”282

A closer look at some of these narratives suggests that religious extremism in Pakistan is not the function of the weakness of the mainstream political parties alone; it is instead the product of the culture of hate spawned by the officially sanctioned text books. Apart from the anti-India tirade in schools text books, the growing fundamentalist influence inside Pakistan underlines the holistic fallout of pursuing a narrow version of ideology. Being the chief arbiter, Musharraf had all the powers and resources of the state to initiate changes in the school curricula as well as social behaviour of a sizeable percentage of its citizens who were conditioned to support an extremely orthodox interpretation of Islam. This conditioning of the mind has taken place due to the proactive role played by its erstwhile military dictator, Zi ul-Haq and perpetuated by subsequent rulers in a subtle way.

Musharraf tried to change some and retained the rest since the balance of power tilted in his favour. He backtracked on his previous promise to introduce a procedural modification in the blasphemy law.283 The rapidity of the government’s retreat in the face of protests by an alliance of Islamic fundamentalist parties showed the weakness of its authority over powerful religious interests”.284 The proposed change in the blasphemy

283 Under the blasphemy law who ever willfully wounds the religious feelings, damages the copy of holy Quran or uses it in any derogatory manner, defiles the sacred name of the holy prophet (PBUH) or defiles the sacred name of any wife or members of the holy Prophets family or any of the Prophets Companions shall be punished severely by the state.
law would have saved the minorities and other disadvantaged sections of Pakistan from frivolous blasphemy accusations. In sum, Musharraf's state was not as pro-active as the Zia regime, but the fact that the former failed to alter the official narratives and act against the forces wedded to retrogressive ideas reveals its passive support to the process of Islamisation.\footnote{Zia's Islamisation involved not only the legal structures but also the army. He changed the motto of the Pakistan army to Iman, Taqwa Jihad fi Sabil Allah (faith, piety & Jihad for Gods Sake). See Khalid Hasan, Rear View Mirror (Lahore: Alhamra Publishing, 2002), p. 13.}